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JANUARY, 1943

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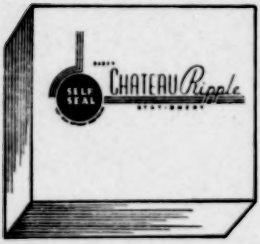

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JACQUES MARITAIN: A PROPHET FOR OUR TIME[1]

Sir Robert Falconer

M. MARITAIN is a many-sided man. He is a Christian philosopher, a social reformer, a critic of the principles of the arts of painting and poetry, and an expert in the theories and fundamentals of the modern sciences. But all these phases of his activity are aspects of a powerfully religious personality. My purpose is to speak of him as a prophet of the Christian faith. More and more he is being listened to by those of all shades of opinion who are in sympathy with a spiritual interpretation of life. I have called him a prophet, for, as an eminent scholar has said, "the final mission of Old Testament prophecy was to liberate the eternal truths of religion from their temporal national embodiment and disclose their true foundation in the immutable character of God and the essential nature of man." Social righteousness is a central theme of the prophets. That M. Maritain is in the true succession of those prophets is evident to anyone who is even casually acquainted with his more popular writings. In fact it is their religious interpretation of problems of the social order that has given them such a wide and varied circle of readers. He is, however, in the succession not only of the prophets of Israel, but also of the prophets and saints of the Christian Church. Like the apostle Paul he entered by a marvellous transition into a fulness of spiritual light; like St Augustine, he passed from a brilliant humanistic society into a new hope for a city of God; like Pascal, who abandoned the sceptical libertines of seventeenth-century Paris, he consecrated his scientific understanding and literary gifts, when the light flooded his soul, to the integration of mankind in a humanism complete and entire.

Out of the most brilliant literary circle of Paris he entered, through travail, into a small company intellectually more humble but spiritually more exalted. An indication of his sense of the change, and of the isolation that he then felt, may possibly be detected in a sentence written many years later in *True Humanism:* "The philosopher [who seeks to rescue the truths that have been distorted by the modern world] attempts in vain to arm himself

[1]A lecture delivered in a series on Christian Culture at Assumption College, Windsor, November 15, 1942.

with the perfect instruments of purification, and runs the risk of having everyone against him." In the France into which he was born in 1882, politics were interwoven with both anti-clerical and religious strands. On the right, at varying distances from the centre were royalists and moderate republicans who were for the most part professing Catholics; on the left, radicals, socialists, differing in degree, and communists, many of whom were anti-clerical. The non-Catholic intellectual circles were saturated with the spirit of rationalism. Nowhere else did the power of the written word sway such an influential society. Humanism reigned in all its glory. The centre of this rationalistic humanism was the Sorbonne, and in that ancient body the pulse of the religious motive had grown very faint. Of the men of letters who spoke to the world from Paris, perhaps the one who received the widest attention was Ernest Renan. He was an exponent of liberalism in religious, social and political thought. Historical criticism, in his view, had shattered Christianity as a system of supernatural beliefs, and, as an eminent French scholar says, "he radically destroyed what Voltaire had shaken." As Maritain was only ten years old when Renan died, he could not have come under his personal influence, but Renan's grandson, Ernest Psichari, who had absorbed his ideas, was one of Maritain's most intimate friends in his young manhood.

Maritain's own grandfather was Jules Favre, who died in 1880. A man of brilliant gifts, a moderate republican and a convinced democrat, associated for a short time with Victor Hugo in the middle of the century, he led the parliamentary opposition against Louis Napoleon first as President and then as Emperor of France. He joined Thiers in resisting a declaration of war against Prussia in 1870, and after the fall of Paris he became Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Government of National Defence, and as such had the thankless task of negotiating a peace with Bismarck and of signing a most disappointing treaty. While not anti-clerical, he opposed the royalists and the clericals in their policy of defending Rome for the Pope with French troops against the national Italian government, and in 1871 he resigned office, though he continued as a deputy and was made senator in 1876, supporting the government against reactionary opposition. A great orator of beautiful style, mystical, emotional and sentimental, he was also for long a member of the French Academy. He became a Protestant, and in

this action he was joined by his daughter, Maritain's mother, who had her son baptized in this faith, though she does not seem to have implanted strong religious convictions in him. "In the family traditions of Jacques Maritain," writes his wife, "it was the idealist love of the people, the republican spirit, and political combats for liberty" that were dominant.

When he entered the Sorbonne its sceptical atmosphere infected him with depression, and from no professor did he hear a voice of confident belief to dissipate the thickening gloom. Here, however, he found a great treasure, for he met the Jewish lady who became his wife. Her book, *Les grandes Amitiés*, giving the story of their joint conversion is a delicately beautiful memoir of their remarkable religious pilgrimage from darkness into light. In her words, "Every intelligible reality vanished like a mirage when one thought of approaching and seizing it, and the sacrosanct 'facts' resolved themselves into the dust of purely empirical disputes, because what was generally denied by the ruling philosophy was the objectivity of our knowledge, our capacity to seize the real." This scepticism as to the attainment of truth and the accessibility of reality plunged them into such despair that even the thought of suicide flitted before them. But they were saved from utter hopelessness when they crossed the street from the Sorbonne to the Collège de France and entered the class-room of Professor Henri Bergson. He was then the most widely read philosopher in Europe, and he delivered his prelections with a personality and a grace of style which filled his class-room. A ray of light broke in upon Maritain as Bergson insisted that the methods of pure rationalism had been a failure, and that by intuition and spiritual sympathy we grasp "Durée, living time, a reality." This was a luminous life-buoy flung to him on a darkling ocean. He became Bergson's most brilliant student, and indeed when Bergson retired was offered his chair, but by that time he had found Bergson's philosophy unsatisfactory and had written against it. "Metaphysics," said Bergson, "consists in seeing in time a progressive increment of the Absolute." "But," replied Maritain, if this were so, "time [would become] a creator and metaphysics a dream." Maritain retained a strong affection for his old master until the end, though he continued to reject his doctrine of time and change, involving, as he thought it did, a practical negation of Being. In one of his recent essays Maritain writes: "Bergson's stroke of genius had been to see that if phenome-

nal science itself enfolds and hides, on its own level and in its formal object, a metaphysical stuff, that stuff can only be true." "His metaphysics is one of the most profound, most penetrating, and most audacious of our time." Bergson in later life drew nearer to the fundamental beliefs of Maritain, as is shown in his *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, which Maritain reviewed with deep appreciation in 1941 in *Ransoming the Time:* "What philosopher has ever studied the things of mystical life with greater good faith, with a more humble and generous love than Henri Bergson?" After many years, in his will, dated four years before his death in January, 1941, Bergson placed on record that he would have become a convert to Catholicism, in which he saw the complete fulfilment of Judaism, had he not wanted to remain loyally by the side of his co-religionists, against whom a formidable wave of anti-semitism was about to break.

Feeling their way in a twilight winter world the Maritains were, to their joy, thrown by the chance reading of an essay into contact with a powerful personality who came to them from a new universe. This was Léon Bloy. Mme Maritain writes, "Life brought him to our shores like a treasure legendary, immense, mysterious." This old man lived with his family in poverty; and his writings, full of indignation against injustice and oppression, stirred some to call him merely a pamphleteer. But he had tender pity for all who suffered, and was widely read for his insight into the mystical, religious life. A prophet "who had lived for long years united to his God by an indestructible love which he knew to be eternal in its essence," he bore unceasing witness by words, both burning and compassionate, to his faith in the Gospel. To meet this man was a revelation to M. Maritain. Here was "a pilgrim of the Absolute" who evidently was in possession of something profoundly real to himself. Could it be the truth? Among others whom he met at Léon Bloy's was his close friend Professor Pierre Termier, a geologist of the highest rank and a devout Christian. It was an impressive combination. Slowly there deepened in the Maritains the conviction of the beauty of holiness. Could they perhaps by an act of the soul attain unto the truth of the love of God? His dawning faith led him to test this in prayer: "My God if you exist and are the truth, make me to know it." Day by day the dark winter of the soul gave way to spring, and supported by their new friends they took the momentous step of being baptized into the Catholic

faith. So in 1906 Jacques Maritain entered the ancestral church which his more immediate forbears had left. Their relatives and former friends were confounded by their conversion. It was to them as though a withering frost had blighted the abundant blossoms of a spring of extraordinary promise. The step cost the Maritains much, though they were not astonished at the solitude which enveloped them. As time passed others followed them, the most notable being Ernest Psichari, who, having pondered deeply during years of soldiering in Africa, professed the Christian faith before he was killed soon after the opening of the first World War.

Having experienced the reality of faith in and love for God, Maritain had to work out for himself a philosophy and system of beliefs which would harmonize with his changed outlook on life. For months he pursued obscurely this end, as he narrates in the second edition of *La Philosophie Bergsonienne*. He regarded it as a mortal error to abandon the concept to rationalism as its normal vehicle, and, unlike Bergson, he could not invalidate the concept as a medium for transmitting the real to our mind. Up till then he had been unfamiliar with the philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas. But he was already a Thomist without knowing it, in that he believed in the authentic value of our human instruments of knowledge. His greatest book, *Degrees of Knowledge*, the second French edition of which was translated into English in 1937, contains, according to those qualified to judge, one of the most original interpretations and developments of Thomist philosophy. There we have Maritain's thought interfused with faith glowing through the intellectual transmission lines along which the current flows. It is a difficult book, partly because of the profundity and subtlety of the thought, partly because the author has created a copious language to clothe it with the most exact possible expression. Professor H. F. Stewart's words about Descartes and Pascal are peculiarly appropriate to the style of Maritain: Descartes "wields an elaborate and highly complicated phrase, full of parentheses and charged with subordinate clauses. So does Pascal on occasion, but the prose of Descartes for all its dignity is lit with cold light, that of Pascal is shot through with warmth and passion which renders it quick and powerful." In Maritain also we have the style of a dominant personality. "He wields an elaborate and highly complicated phrase, full of parentheses and charged with subordinate clauses," but "shot through with warmth and passion"; his imagery, truthful and original, often soars into poetic beauty.

It is not my purpose, nor have I the competence, to discuss M. Maritain as a philosopher: suffice it to say that the Thomist philosophy which he and others have revived is receiving serious attention in widely different circles of modern thought. I will venture, however, a few words on the *Degrees of Knowledge* because the principles of his religious philosophy underlie all his proposals for a reconstructed society. He accepts the fundamental Thomist noetic: "the assumption of the existence of things apart from the mind, and the possibility of the mind's awareness of things and of its power to construct, by its own rightful activity rising from the senses, a true knowledge in conformity with reality." Human knowledge is only possible as a knowledge gained through the senses. We must start from the axiom that truth is "conformity between the intelligence and the thing . . . . The apprehension of Being is absolutely primary, and is implied in all our other intellectual apprehensions." "It is existence we attain to in attaining to the world of intelligibility." "The natural sciences pre-suppose the existence in the interior world of hidden ontological structures." "Through the knowledge of the world of human beings our intelligence arrives at man and the soul, and by reflective and practical philosophy it soars upwards to perceive the things which are of God, passing into metaphysics." "Metaphysics is directed towards a world of truths above time which are realized in temporal existence and towards a supreme super-temporal reality pre-eminent above all things." "Being, the human soul with its transcendental properties, constitutes the rightful object of metaphysics." "It grasps a world of eternal truths; the intellect thirsts for things that are Divine." "The process by which reason demonstrates that God is puts the reason itself in an attitude of natural adoration and intellectual admiration." "'He who is' is pre-eminently God's name. But the Divine nature is hidden from our metaphysical gaze." "Personality is necessary for God, the very seal of transcendence, infinite personality, transcendent in His essence, yet immanent in all things, in order ceaselessly to give them movement . . . . He knows and really loves created things. God is love." "Thus we rise to the super-rational though this knowledge remains conceptual and human."

Higher than metaphysical knowledge is the experimental knowledge of the deep things of God when mystically the soul "feels the life of God." The supreme form of wisdom, an order

infinitely above the other degrees of knowledge, is given by supernatural grace, which grafts a new spiritual nature into the soul through the indwelling of God, rising in the saints to rapt contemplation of the Divine, a foretaste on earth of the experience of our homeland in heaven. "There must be in the soul in a state of grace filaments delicately sensitive to the breath of heaven .... We are like children who have been endowed with a supernatural art, a pencil wherewith to write on the sky. It is necessary that God should put his hand over ours to guide our trembling lines." This practical science of contemplation and union with God, "a loving attention to God," engenders in the saints the present experience, even through suffering, of Divine love, to be fulfilled hereafter through the supreme effort of love in the eternal beatific vision. The delectation—it is not too strong a word—with which Maritain describes this contemplative life of wisdom suggests that here he is giving us a transcript of his own experience. Now and then in the concluding chapters of *Degrees of Knowledge*, we catch prevenient tones in an intellectual prelude, as it were, to the heavenly world, while for their supreme poetic expression we must listen to Dante as in the last cantos of the *Paradiso*:[2]

> Forth from the last corporeal are we come
> Into the heav'n that is unbodied light,
> Light intellectual replete with love,
> Love of true happiness replete with joy,
> Joy that transcends all sweetness of delight ....
>
> There is in heav'n a light, whose goodly shine
> Makes the Creator visible to all
> Created, that in seeing Him alone
> Have peace.

Can the beatific vision, the supreme knowledge of Divine love, as fully experienced by the saints hereafter in joy, be symbolized in a more beautiful emblem than the Heavenly Rose of the saints who celebrate His glory whom they love?

> Faces had they of flame, and wings of gold;
> The rest was whiter than the driven snow.

A great deal of M. Maritain's work in recent years is concerned with the application of his Thomist thought to modern social and political problems; to mention only such writings as *Freedom in*

[2] xxx:39-43;100-4.

the Modern World, True Humanism,[3] *Ransoming the Time, The End of Machiavellianism.* We may recall the world of which he was writing. The brilliant and gay culture of Paris was disintegrating morally, socially and politically. In western civilization there was little conviction as to the reality of spiritual truth. Such humanism as existed was a mass of implicated and tangled ideas, uprooted from any superhuman source, living on themselves or decaying, mere patches of floating islands torn by storms of unbelief from the mainland and drifting hither and thither as the gusts changed. "In Descartes, Rousseau, Kant, rationalism had set up a proud and splendid image of the personality of man, and condemned any intervention from outside in this perfect and sacred universe .... Yet in little more than a century this proud anthropocentric personality had perished; first with the triumph of the Darwinian ideas, while the *coup de grace* was given by Freud." In the nineteenth century man sought security through the accumulation of material wealth, and in the twentieth came a reversal of all values. A secular doctrine of progress motivated by absolute atheism had scorched the European scene. Christianity had passed into eclipse. The failure of the Christian people to effect a real humanism was followed by the rise of what were practically new religions, or rather substitutes for religion. The spirit of Nietzsche ruled the German world with its blood nationalism; that of Marx ruled Russia with its cult of atheism. Communism is an earthly religion of the most imperious quality. It seeks to provide its adherents with a new hope of a far better human society when the final triumph over all that oppresses mankind's material life shall have been achieved. Here I would interject the remark that the incredible sacrifices now being made for their homeland by the Russians prove that their hopes, whatever their roots, have welded them into an unbreakable unity. Will this suffering release powerful spiritual elements which we know are embedded in the Russian character?

German national socialism is the result of "the intensely and morbidly industrialized German civilization deeply penetrated by the spirit of modern capitalism, which, after a crushing military defeat, arrived at general bankruptcy together with frightful material misery of the poorer classes." Grounding their effort on a ridiculous biological theory of race and blood, the Nazis have set forth to wipe out other civilizations and to dominate the world.

[3] *L'Humanisme intégral,* more accurately translated, *Complete Humanism.*

To begin with they tried to drive the Jews out of Germany, even to annihilate them, using myth, illusion, prestige of race, as fabricated reasons for their cruelties. Never anywhere had the Jews been so assimilated to any people as in Germany. Devoted to earthly business, money having for them a mystical attraction, they had there become thoroughly reconciled to the Prince of this world. But the national hatred of the Germans towards them springs also from another source: the Jewish people bear witness to the Divine in history; they cling to a belief in the justice of God to be revealed in time. Their passion for the Absolute exasperated tyrants who are mere clods without a spark of the Divine. Israel is a scapegoat against which the impure sufferings of the world strike back. Nobly has M. Maritain repaid the debt to his wife and Henri Bergson by his repeated appeals for a place for the Jews in a pluralistic civilization.

A further factor in the distress into which the modern world has fallen is the capitalistic system which hides a radical disorder. "The objective spirit of capitalism is the exaltation of man's active and inventive powers .... In it the poor man exists only as an instrument of production, a 'hand,' not a person. This social system has worsened until it is on the point of becoming intolerable." To counteract the evils of capitalism, however, socialism is no sufficient antidote. "In socialism also the very idea of freedom and autonomy is in danger. A proletariat in part plutocratized, in part a proletarianized swarm, may range itself under the banners of a demagogic, fanatical and sectarian communism."

Now we are in this horrible catastrophe into which an anthropocentric humanism, one in which man's ideals and hopes have been set entirely on an earthly existence, has plunged us. This description has brought Browning's lines to my mind:

> Grey plain all around:
> Nothing but plain to the horizon's bound.
> I might go on; nought else remained to do,
> So, on I went; I think I never saw
> Such starved ignoble nature; nothing throve.[4]

We are in the twilight of civilization. Is it before nightfall or before dawn? "The situation would be really desperate, at least as to the near future, if men and nations which know the price of liberty had not decided on an heroic effort of redress."

[4] *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*, 52-6.

The outbreak of the war has ranged in their serried might the forces of the god of this world against all that is Christian. The Nazis are trying to wipe out Christianity. This is the supreme outcome of Machiavellianism. Maritain traces the growth of this system during the past four centuries from the moderate type to the complete development that now reigns. Moderate Machiavellianism is the practice of those who hold in *theory* to the concept of the common good as the end in politics, but frankly use Machiavellian means to procure their ends. Now we are confronted with open and unabashed Machiavellianism. It means the accepting of non-morality in practical politics, the worship of the state, "an impetuous, irrational, revolutionary, wild and demoniacal Machiavellianism, for which boundless injustice, boundless violence, boundless lying and immorality are normal political means, and which draws from this very boundlessness of evil an abominable strength." A nation will only be saved if it will stand up and fight this Machiavellian monster. Only if what remains of Christian civilization opposes it will absolute Machiavellianism be crushed. Besides, Maritain holds that "there is a natural justice of God in human history. . . . The sanctions of historical justice fail much more rarely than our short-sighted experience might induce us to believe."

During the war the aim of the United Nations has been proclaimed by our leaders to be the securing of freedom for the wide world. Again and again Mr Roosevelt has promised that our victory will mean a victory for freedom; for the ideals of the family, the simple principles of common decency and humanity, and religion; all of which he has summed up in the four freedoms: freedom of speech and religion, freedom from fear and want throughout the world. M. Maritain would doubtless accept this programme; for he too is a prophet of freedom, but of a full and complete freedom. Free choice is not an end in itself. "French liberalism and indeed the ruling liberalism of the 19th century, assumed that freedom of choice was an end in itself. But the absolute right of each part to realise its choices tends naturally to dissolve the whole in anarchy." Free choice is given in order that man may reach the freedom of personal autonomy. The more complete a man, the freer he becomes. While "freedom is an inalienable property of every intellectual and spiritual nature it is because the will has by nature a capacity for the infinite, and tends

necessarily to an infinite good." "Nowhere more fully than in the beatitude of love is there freedom of autonomy." "It is with the liberty of God himself that the man of perfect soul is free."

We hope that, when we win, the twilight before the dawn will usher in a better civilization; but M. Maritain would say that if the result is to be worth the endurance of the evils of the black night through which we are stumbling, it must issue in a *theocentric* humanism, "a spiritual resurrection instinct with a love whose centre is fixed infinitely above the world and temporal history." "It must be the blossoming, the earthly fructification of human life—material, moral and intellectual—in justice, nobility of heart, wisdom, science and art—the work of the spirit of liberty." "The common good in the temporal order is an intermediate end, which gives the state its character, to the establishment of social conditions which will secure for the mass of men such a standard of material, intellectual and moral life as will conduce to the well-being of the whole community; so that every citizen will find in it a positive help in the progressive achievement of his freedom of autonomy." In the new Christian society there will be pluralism; and, as is not the case in totalitarian societies, religious uniformity will not be imposed. Medieval Christianity will not be restored, nor will there be a new theocracy. "The end of freedom, in so far as it concerns the community of men, constitutes the only city which imposes on human personality neither constraint nor sacrifice, for the common good of this city will be the good also of humanity." In the new commonweal there will be embodied a greater variety of personal liberties for the individual, for the family, for the group. While it will be vitally Christian, unbelievers will share with believers for its secular and temporal ends, and in it the dignity of human personality and its spiritual vocation will be promoted. Modern civilization, though a worn-out garment, is not to be thrown away, but the imperishable strands of its past must be re-woven into a new garment. The true, theocentric humanism "re-habilitates the life of the profane city, the social and political order, the movement of the temporal progression of humanity—a temporal regime conformable to human dignity." "It is only in a new Christendom, in the future, that the ethical and affective value of the word democracy, which corresponds to what may be called a popular civic consciousness, will be really achieved." "The realization of this hope none of us may see, for the liquidation of four or five centuries of history does not take place in a day."

How is this ideal to be inaugurated? How are democracies to discover their vital principle of justice and love, the source of which is divine? We must begin to realize this integral humanism by each Christian thinking, acting and living in a Christian way in all phases of common life. We must not shun political effort, though there should be no strictly Christian political party.[5] Believers should infuse the Christian spirit into their activities in the terrestrial city. Honourable citizens, working in groups authentically Christian in spirit, will carry on temporal activities in the present with the remote object at long range of renewing society on a theocratic basis. They will be a minority acting like a leaven of truth, justice and love. A Christian *Diaspora*, spread in groups over the whole surface of the globe, they will disseminate among the nations a new Christendom. The terrestrial city will be irradiated by gifts from the celestial. The grace of God will perfect, not destroy, human nature, and will help it to discover greater truths in the natural order, while the individual will, through Divine wisdom, develop his personality for the future beatific vision of the love of God.

M. Maritain writes, of course, primarily for members of his own communion. What has he for us outsiders? To the Scottish Presbyterian puritanism in which I was born and bred, he would probably be antipathetic; my church he holds to be non-apostolic, its worship jejune, its doctrine perilously defective. But he is willing to have us co-operate in establishing a new humanism, in promoting a new Christendom. While he would not allow that we have *explicit* faith, he believes that we may have *implicit* faith in Christ. "The basis of fellowship with non-catholics is not of the order of the intellect and of ideas, but of the heart and of love. It is friendship, natural friendship, but first and foremost mutual love in God and for God. Not a fellowship of beliefs but a fellowship of men who believe. What each one is before God neither the one nor the other knows . . . . Only through love can peace and union

[5]M. Maritain may have in mind the bitterness of anti-clericalism in France in the nineteenth century and since. An apposite reflection occurs in Sir Walter Scott's *Journal*, April 19, 1828: "My old and kind friend, Sir Thomas Acland, may now be considered as the head of the religious party in the House of Commons, a powerful body which Wilberforce long commanded. It is a difficult situation; for the adaptation of religious motives to earthly policy is apt—among the infinite delusions of the human heart—to be a snare."

come to men." "This mutual comprehension cannot in any way involve any less intangible, more definite, more visible communion, expressed in the order of the speculative and practical intellect by some community of symbol or sacred ritual. But on the level of the temporal and profane life it is proper that the effort towards union should express itself."

We non-Catholics welcome M. Maritain as an authentic prophet for our time. His passion for sanctification, without which no one shall see the Lord, his insight into Divine love and wisdom, his transfer of the fruits of this contemplation for the healing of our disordered society, his interpretation of the meaning of personality and freedom in their reality and fulness—all this is enriching our Christian heritage. Moreover, his conviction that a living God of wisdom and justice moves through history supports us in this demonic struggle, and encourages us to hope for the gradual realization of a humanity more complete and entire, when peace after victory shall have been won.

THE MIND OF EDWARD GIBBON (II)

C. N. Cochrane

IN the former of these two articles,* we examined the intellectual history of Edward Gibbon in order to discover the influences which contributed to inform his mind and thus equip him for his task as author of the *Decline and Fall*. We tried to estimate his obligations to the Greek and Latin classics and to modern literature, particularly the literature of eighteenth-century thought. The result was to show that, while the development of Gibbon's genius was by no means narrow or one-sided, there was one element which predominated in his intellectual discipline, and it was this which coloured, even if it did not wholly dictate, his appreciation of the issue. Gibbon wrote in the spirit and with the resources of philosophic scepticism. It was as a philosophic sceptic that he embarked on his investigation and that he reached his final verdict in the words: "I have described the triumph of barbarism and religion." Accordingly, the next step must be to consider how the sceptical philosophy is applied by Gibbon, and to examine its value as a principle of historical interpretation. We shall begin by raising at once the vexed question of Gibbon's attitude to Christianity.

IV

It is a mistake to suppose, with certain of his critics, that the animus of Gibbon is directed against the church rather than the faith, against historical Christianity but not against the Evangel of Christ. True indeed, he opens his polemic in the celebrated fifteenth and sixteenth chapters by distinguishing between "the pure and humble religion" of the Founder on the one hand and on the other "the inevitable mixture of error and corruption which it contracted in a long residence upon earth among a weak and degenerate race of beings." This, however, is merely a debater's expedient calculated to mask the force of the attack and, if possible, to turn the flank of the defence. In a famous observation on the pagan cults Gibbon had remarked that to the people they were equally true, to the philosopher equally false, and to the politician equally useful. He thus stigmatized them for their purely pragmatic

*The first article appeared in the issue of October, 1942.

character in a spirit which would have been agreeable to Augustine himself; for it is precisely this charge that Augustine levels against paganism. But while, even for enlightened pagans, the important thing about a god was not his reality but the reality of his cult ("the will to believe"), the Christian on the other hand claimed allegiance for his religion first and foremost because he held it to be true. For him, as distinguished from his pagan contemporaries, everything therefore depended upon the existence of the Deity whom he worshipped, a Deity whom he put forward as *summa substantia*, the "cause" of all being, all order and all life or process in the universe. This claim scepticism rejected, by denying to the concept of substance (whether material or immaterial) any intelligible meaning, and by resolving the concept of cause into a mere inference based on the observable uniformities of sensible phenomena, in the words of Hume, "a native determination of the mind itself to find in the future the same pattern as we have witnessed in our past experience" and thus dependent entirely upon the so-called laws of association, the resemblance, contiguity and constant conjunction of events. This, obviously, was to cut at the very root of Christian faith. Hence, for those like Gibbon, who accepted the sceptical philosophy, that faith took rank as just another variant in the endless series of delusions to which the human spirit was prone; to be accounted for as a product of fear and credulity on the one hand and, on the other, the machinations of designing priests and statesmen who used and abused it as, alternatively, the opiate or stimulant of the masses.

Accordingly, Gibbon's attitude is to be understood, not as the consequence of a "permanent mental lesion" suffered during the spiritual crisis of his adolescence, but rather as an expression of righteous indignation on the part of a thoroughly honest man against what he conceived to be an amalgam of hypocrisy and fraud—a man, however, who was totally unconscious that his own vision was clouded and, we may add, distorted by the spectacles he wore. In saying this, I do not for a moment question the significance of the religious crisis as a contributing factor. Doubtless it played its part in bringing Gibbon into line with the dominant intellectual tendencies of his day. But I insist that what he thought as an adult was at least as decisive in shaping his attitude as anything that may have happened to his nerves in boyhood—nerves which, by the way, seem to have been thoroughly sound

throughout his life. "I believed as I still believe," he wrote, "that the propagation of the Gospel, and the triumph of the church, are inseparably connected with the decline of the Empire."

For a characteristic expression of the sceptical attitude, we need only refer to Hume's essay on the *Natural History of Religions.* The title itself indicates a fresh approach to the question of religious phenomena. Philosophic scepticism looks at them all with equal detachment, and it brands them indiscriminately as manifestations of the sub-rational in human nature, as pathological or animal and, thus, hardly to be understood. As Hume quite simply was to put it: the whole is "a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery," to be accounted for only "as a disease of the human mind." "Examine the religious opinions which have, in fact, prevailed over the world. You will scarcely be persuaded that they are anything more than sick-men's dreams. Or perhaps you will regard them more as the playsome whimsies of monkeys in human shape than the serious, positive, dogmatic asseverations of a being who dignifies himself with the name of rational."

Accordingly, it is not surprising that the attitude of the modern Tacitus towards the Christians differs little from that of his ancient counterpart towards the Bacchanalian conspirators of 184 B.C. Thus, while applauding the general spirit of toleration prevalent within the Empire, he justifies the exceptional restrictions imposed upon the faithful, on the ground that they were a subversive element in the community. In this he is not, as has recently been argued, disingenuous. He merely reflects the prejudice of philosophical scepticism, as will be evident to anyone who considers Hume's enquiry into morals and the secularization of ethical values to which it points. The values therein put forward, while claiming to be universal, were in fact merely cosmopolitan, the product of "reason and taste," the reason and taste of the eighteenth century. In applying them as he does, Gibbon associates himself with the enlightenment in its effort to "wipe out the infamy," and all the evidence he accumulated of evils within the ancient church (of which there were admittedly many) is just so much grist to the mill. His Christian antagonists, on the other hand, were quite justified in their instinctive revulsion from his work. What is distressing to a student of the so-called Gibbon controversy is that the opposition they put up was so weak as to deserve Gibbon's contempt. The trouble was that they wasted their

strength in attacking secondary objectives such as the historicity of miracles, while wholly neglecting the central question of Gibbon's logic, upon which the issue ultimately depended. The reason for this was that their thinking was governed by an ideology not so remote after all from Gibbon's own, an ideology which was to fill the churches of contemporary England with statues of generals and admirals in place of saints, and to cover the walls with tablets commemorating their largely secular virtues.

V

Christianity presents itself to Gibbon as a type, perhaps the most formidable type, of superstition; and this apparently with little or no sense of its relatively pure and innocuous character in a society filled with the grossest and most shocking forms of pagan *religio*. Our concern is not, however, to institute any comparison between pagan and Christian standards of life or thought, but merely to discover what Gibbon means by superstition. To him superstition was not, as it was for the Christians, the prostitution of the mind and heart to its own fancies (*fantastica fornicatio*). It was rather a resurgence of the infantile and bestial in human nature against the domination of the mind. From this standpoint, it emerged as the monstrous offspring of ignorance, credulity, fanaticism and obstinacy; in other words, as a reversion to barbarism, which we must now briefly discuss.

Gibbon's picture of barbarism, unlike that of the Romantics, involves no idealization of the noble savage. On the contrary, it hardly rises, at any rate on the lowest plane, above the life of animality. "In this primitive and abject condition [Gibbon is speaking of the savages on the Red Sea coast], which ill deserves the name of society, the human brute, without arts or laws, almost without sense or language, is poorly distinguished from the rest of animal creation." Even time, which counts for so much in the life of civilized society, is quite devoid of significance: "Generations and ages might roll away in silent oblivion and the helpless savage was restrained from multiplying his race by the wants and pursuits which confined his existence."

In general, then, the savage or barbarian (Gibbon hardly troubles to distinguish between them) emerges as the hapless victim of natural forces which serve to condition and qualify his existence. How they do so may be seen from his pages on the

Germans and the Scyths. In either case the ultimate determinant is physical and such characteristic differences as manifest themselves in Germanic and Scythian ways of life are thought to depend upon this fact. Thus, for example, the German land is one of great rivers, deep and impenetrable forests, intense and prolonged cold. In all the world, opines Gibbon, there is nothing like it except, perhaps, Canada. Amid these conditions the German tribes sustain themselves in palisaded villages sparsely located in occasional clearings of the forest. The question is: how do these conditions affect their life?

In depicting the Germanic way of life, Gibbon strikes three notes. The first is one of inconsistency. Against a background of drudgery on the part of wives and captives, the old and the weak, appears the lazy warrior, "at once the most indolent and most restless of mankind," seeking either "self-effacing oblivion" in drink and gambling or self-expression, "a more lively sense of his existence," through the violent exercise and violent emotion of waging war. The second note struck is that of improvidence, in which liberty is confused with licence, "freedom in gratifying present passion, courage in overlooking all future consequences." Thus incapable of prudence, the German is still less capable of philosophy. Accordingly, as the third note of his life, he is exposed to the "blind terrors of superstition." "As for their religious system, if the wild opinions of savages can deserve that name, it is dictated by their wants, their fears and their ignorance."

By contrast with primitive Germanism, Gibbon offers a quite different picture of the Scyths, though here again the determinants are the same. The mark of Scythian life is a dull uniformity, determined physically by the great open spaces, and it finds expression on the plane of instinct rather than of reason. "The operation of instinct," says Gibbon,

> is more sure and simple than that of reason—and the savage tribes of mankind, as they approach nearer to the condition of animals, preserve a stronger resemblance both to them and to each other. The uniform stability of their manners is the natural consequence of the imperfection of their faculties [i.e., the faculties have no chance to develop in such conditions]. Reduced to a similar situation, their wants, their desires, their enjoyments still continue the same; and the influence of food or climate, which in a more improved state of society is suspended or subdued by so many moral causes, most forcefully contributes to form and to maintain the national character.

But if this is barbarism, what is civilization? For answer,

we shall once more quote the words of Gibbon himself: "The different characters that mark the civilized nations of the globe may be variously ascribed to the use and abuse of reason, which so variously shapes, and so artificially composes, the manners and opinions of a European or a Chinese." And again: "In a civilized state every faculty of man is expanded and exercised, and the great chain of mutual dependence connects and embraces the several members of society. The most numerous portion of it is employed in constant and useful labour. The select few, placed by fortune above that necessity, can however fill up their time by the pursuit of interest or glory, by the improvement of their estate or their understanding, by the duties, the pleasures, or even the follies of social life." A genuinely civilized order is an order which makes this liberty and this diversity possible, by guaranteeing them alike against the subversive forces of anarchy and despotism.

Gibbon's notion of civilized order is thus utterly static and immobile; in this respect, it falls little short of the ideals of Classicism put forward by the political theorists of antiquity. "Such is the constitution of civil society," he writes, "that, whilst a few persons are distinguished by riches, by honours, and by knowledge, the body of the people is condemned to obscurity, ignorance and poverty." And again:

> Most of the crimes which disturb the internal peace of society are produced by the restraints which the necessary, but unequal, laws of property have imposed on the appetites of mankind, by confining to a few the possession of those objects which are coveted by many. Of all our passions and appetites, the love of power is of the most imperious and unsociable nature, since the pride of one man requires the submission of the multitude. In the tumult of civil discord the laws of society lose their force, and their place is seldom supplied by those of humanity. The ardour of contention, the pride of victory, the despair of success, the memory of past injuries and the fear of future dangers, all contribute to inflame the mind and to silence the voice of pity. From such motives almost every page of history has been stained with civil blood.

For Gibbon the life of civilization is the life of virtue; its antithesis (superstition or barbarism) is vice. Accordingly, the qualities of the virtuous man are political and social; and (as he puts it in his notes for a revision of the first volume of the *Decline and Fall*),

> the first place in the hall of fame is due and assigned to the successful heroes who had struggled in adversity; who after signalizing their valour in the deliverance of their country, have displayed their wisdom and virtue in the founda-

tion or government of a flourishing state. Such men were Moses, Cyrus, Alfred, Gustavus Vasa, Henry IV of France, etc., and, in Rome, perhaps above all others, Trajan. The thirst of military glory will ever be the vice of the most exalted minds. Late generations and far distant climates may impute their calamities to the immortal author of the *Iliad*. The spirit of Alexander was inflamed by the praises of Achilles; and succeeding heroes have been ambitious to tread in Alexander's footsteps. Like him Trajan aspired for the conquest of the East.

To see virtue with Gibbon as the life of civilization, is to see also what he means by vice or degeneracy. Accordingly, we need hardly labour the point. I should like, however, to call attention to one conspicuous example, as it appears in the picture of the Emperor Commodus, son and successor to Marcus Aurelius, the "philosopher-king." It is clear that, to the historian, this example must have been of crucial significance since he takes the accession of Commodus to the purple as the starting-point for the long agony of the decline and fall.

To Gibbon, as to his ancient authorities, Commodus represents the very embodiment of classical vice, and therefore everything to be deprecated in what has apologetically been called "the weaker and darker side" of the classical world; and this despite "the anxious care of a father" to render him worthy of his destiny, "the fond partiality of a parent for the worthless boy to whose monstrous vices of avarice, cruelty and lust he was to sacrifice the happiness of millions." We need not linger over the historian's picture of the Roman Hercules, burlesquing in the arena all that was sacred in the Antonine ideal of public service, the tyrant whose murder was to be hailed in the senate with "effusions of impotent rage," a son so utterly unlike his father that the authors of the *Augustan History* took refuge in the theory that he must be illegitimate and "explained" him in terms of the gallantries of his mother, the Empress Faustina.

The point of Gibbon's criticism will be clearer if we set it over against an interpretation recently offered by another and quite different authority, Dr Wilhelm Weber, Professor of Ancient History in the University of Berlin. Weber begins by contrasting the characters of Commodus and Marcus. It was the destiny of Commodus, he declares, to disrupt the concept of world harmony for which his father stood, a harmony based upon the universality of mind, "the commonwealth of reasoning men," and to reveal the *virtus Augusti* in a novel and startling light: as a "life lived beyond the world of reason, compounded of the potencies of the

body, of instinct and of imagination." This life the historian puts forward as an escape from "the anaemic intellectualism of classical society"; and he pronounces it truly creative, pointing the way to a new order, an order founded on "provincialism, militarism and barbarism," according to a logic which "was deeply rooted in the aspirations of the age and, therefore, genuine." As the embodiment of such a logic, the Emperor, "unchecked though he was by any laws of morality, without care whether fair boys or women served his appetites, whether he shed the blood of strangers or of his own kin, breaking any fetters that could enchain him, yet felt himself without guilt or stain, the source of all piety and the creator of all happiness." This was to repudiate and reject the classical ideal of *humanitas* and, therewith, of its corollary *civilitas*, the attitude proper to a citizen in relation to his fellows. It was to substitute for classical *humanitas* a new ideal of *humilitas* or self-abasement, the abasement of the Emperor before the "Most High God" of his imagination, and of all others before the Emperor as the earthly counterpart of this "Most High God." By classical standards the man who proposed such a programme would have been deemed guilty of *hybris* or *adrogantia* and thus richly deserving of the fate which overtook him. Yet the memory of the Emperor, though it suffered a temporary eclipse with his assassination, was presently to be rehabilitated in the apotheosis he received as Divus Commodus, and he was to be hailed as, in truth, "the rising sun of a new world."

The interpretation thus offered contains elements of the fantastic. It exalts the very features of human nature which Gibbon condemns, "the vital impulses" as opposed to the "life of reason," and to those impulses it ascribes genuine creativity. For it the promise of humanity is fulfilled in the release of vagrant emotions and passions which are identified as a counterpart in the human psyche to the *hormé* operating in the physical world, and it claims that by such release the life of man is "attuned" to the life or movement of nature. Yet despite the exaggeration with which it is put forward, the point of view is not without significance. It had the merit of directing attention to certain aspects of human nature which were persistently ignored or misunderstood by rationalism, whether of the classical or of the neo-classical type. This will be evident when we consider Gibbon's account of the decline and fall and the theory of human nature on which it is based.

VI

We are now in a position to examine Gibbon's work in its deeper and more universal significance, i.e., as illustrating his views regarding the problem of causation in history. And this, incidentally, will serve to reveal his attitude to contemporary civilization, its position and prospects, especially in relation to current ideas of human progress and perfectibility.

The problem is the eclipse of the Roman Empire; the *locus classicus*, the famous appendix to chapter XXXVIII, entitled "General Observations on the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West." To look at this passage is to discover, in the first place, that the historian finds nothing for astonishment in that catastrophe. "The story of its ruin," he declares, "is simple and obvious, and instead of inquiring why it was destroyed, we should rather be surprised that it subsisted so long; it was the natural and inevitable result of immoderate greatness." At this last phrase, the reader may, perhaps, rub his eyes. Does it imply, he may ask, a lurking faith in the existence of some principle of limitation hidden in nature, whether conceived theologically like the *nemesis* of the Athenian dramatists, or mechanically, like the law of *tisis* (action and reaction) invoked by Heraclitus and Herodotus? The answer is that it does not. True to the spirit of scepticism, Gibbon proceeds at once to translate his principle of decline into intelligible terms by resolving it into terms of "physical" and "moral" causation. Of purely physical causes, the sceptical philosopher has little to say beyond qualifying his findings, in the manner and language of Hume, by the significant admission that they are valid "so long as the face of nature remains the same." In a similar spirit, he rejects the notion of Fortune, at any rate in the sense that this was conceived by the obscurantists of classical antiquity. With these provisos, he turns to moral causes for his real explanation. "The historian," he observes, "may content himself with the observation which seems to be justified by experience, that man has much more to fear from the passions of his fellow-creatures than from the convulsion of the elements." (Was he thinking of the Lisbon earthquake and Voltaire's *Candide*?) This being admitted, what moral causes, apart from the discarded notion of original and actual sin, can he make use of?

There is no need to embark on any lengthy discussion of the

moral values of philosophic scepticism and the Age of Reason. It will be sufficient to recall that those values were wholly mundane, and thus, as in Gibbon's own case, beautifully epitomized in his famous characterization of the Antonine Age as "the happiest and most prosperous period in the history of the human race." The predilections of Gibbon were, in this respect, strongly supported by Hume himself, in his contemptuous repudiation of "monkish virtues" as inconsistent with the ideas of men of sense who "judge of things by their natural, unprejudiced reason without the delusive glosses of superstition." Hume thus denounces as vices "celibacy, fasting, penance, mortification, self-denial, humility, silence, solitude," since these have "no real utility or social purpose." "A gloomy, hair-brained enthusiast," he concludes, "may after his death have a place in the calendar, but will scarcely ever be admitted when alive into intimacy and society, except by those who are as delirious and dismal as himself." Such were the sentiments of the master; readers of Gibbon will remember how faithfully they are echoed in his work.

We may thus perceive how the method of experimental science serves to determine the issue raised by the collapse of antiquity; to the eye of science, that issue inevitably presents itself as one between "vice" and "virtue," and these in turn, by an identification equally obvious, are equated respectively with barbarism and civilization. And this is precisely the mode in which it is envisaged by Gibbon.

To formulate the issue as Gibbon does is largely to determine its solution. For this purpose, indeed, all that is needed is to put the argument into reverse. In other words, if civilized order be identified with the rule of reason, then its collapse may be explained quite simply as an abdication of reason from the seat of power, its defeat at the hands of passion and instinct, the triumph of the heart, the belly and the loins over the head. But at this point we encounter a serious difficulty: what account can be given of the impulse to disruption and disorder, the impulse which prompts civilized man to smash the work of his own hands? Why and under what conditions does this impulse operate to set in motion the process of decline? The answer offered by Gibbon to this question is deeply significant and reveals the very core of his thought.

Philosophic scepticism had abolished the old gods; it denied, as we have seen, the existence of any cosmic urge or *hormé*,

whether theological or physical, working in nature to frustrate and nullify the aspirations of mankind. On the other hand, their modern substitutes (the obscurantist concepts now in vogue) had not yet been invented in Gibbon's day; nor, if they had, could he as a conscientious sceptic have bowed down before them. Having repudiated all but the evidences of sense, the sceptic had nothing to fall back on except what experimental science told him about the human psyche; and, from this standpoint, he did not even possess the light which was to be thrown on the workings of the psyche by modern investigators whose researches have served to illuminate so vividly the darker and more obscure recesses of the human spirit. Accordingly, all that Gibbon could do was to attack his problem from within the limits of the so-called classical psychology. He thus begins, quite in the spirit of Hume, by making certain identifications of more than dubious validity. In the first place, order is identified with the dictatorship of intelligence whose injunctions are uncritically accepted as universal and absolute, and that merely because of their formal character, i.e., because of their claim to be so. Disorder or anarchy, on the other hand, is conceived as animal impulse within the human soul. In the second place, this reasonable order is made to depend on virtue and, at the same time, it is provided with a criterion of value in the concept of "general," social and political, utility, while vice, the release of the passions and so the opposite of virtue, is branded as subjective and particularist. It is further assumed that reason, the principle of order and virtue, is committed to an endless struggle with the principle of disorder, like Plato's charioteer driving the furious and unruly steeds of passion. Such is the version offered by experimental science of what had otherwise been diagnosed as "the warfare of the members."

But why should the charioteer flag in his efforts and permit the untamed beasts to escape from control? Gibbon's answer to this question is perfectly clear: this, he suggests, is merely a question of "degeneracy," the refusal of man to carry the awful burden of civilization. "The diminutive stature of mankind . . . was daily sinking below the old standard, and the Roman world was indeed peopled by a race of pigmies, when the fierce giants of the north broke in and mended the puny breed. They restored a manly spirit of freedom; and, after the revolution of the centuries, freedom became the happy parent of taste and science."

It thus appears that the question, as Gibbon sees it, is in the first instance one of freedom, and this freedom he envisages empirically as social and political. "A martial nobility and stubborn commons, possessed of arms, tenacious of property, and collected into constitutional assemblies, form the only balance capable of preserving a free constitution against the enterprises of an aspiring prince." And he adds: "The principles of a free constitution are irrevocably lost, when the legislative power is nominated by the executive." Here, in very truth, breathes the spirit of 1688; more ambiguously, perhaps, the spirit of '76; for it is notorious that Gibbon had little sympathy with the American Revolution and, still less with the revolution in France, in both of which he discerned subversive tendencies, the "demon of anarchy," "the Gallic frenzy," "the wild theories of equal and boundless freedom," "the strange eccentric motions of a democracy, which always acts from the passion of the moment," "the fatal consequence of democratic principles which lead by a path of flowers into the abyss of hell." In this connection we may perhaps recall his well-known recantation on the subject of Edmund Burke, written after he had read Burke's *Reflections*. "Burke's book is a most admirable medicine," he confesses, "against the French disease, which has made too much progress even in this happy country. I admire his eloquence, I approve his politics, I adore his chivalry, and I can forgive even his superstition [*aliter*, I can almost excuse his reverence for church establishments]."

But to Gibbon, a second and not less essential freedom was that of the mind, in words which he translates from Tacitus, the freedom "to think what you like and to say what you think"; with this proviso, of course, that you are qualified by nature and nurture for this particular mode of self-expression. In this respect, he is a thoroughgoing aristocrat of the classical type.

For Gibbon, however, degeneracy involves much more than the loss of political or intellectual freedom, important to civilized order as these may be. Civilized order contains other and not less essential ingredients, like security and prosperity, and the protection of these values may and often does (as he perceived) involve some restriction of liberty and independence, whether of body or mind. Here we are brought face to face with the crux of his position. This is, that civilized society is, after all, subject to a principle of limitation inherent in its very being and transforming its most

cherished values and ideals into dangerous, possibly even fatal, liabilities. The principle in question is not, however, cosmic but human, and prosperity itself, for Gibbon perhaps the ultimate goal of secular order, constitutes a menace to the order which creates it, though the peril may lurk unnoticed in the body politic until the virus has done its work. This is as much as to say that civilized society bears within itself the seeds of its own dissolution. And so much Gibbon would apparently admit: History the teacher which provides experimental science with evidence to support and confirm its generalizations (see Hume), offers a conspicuous illustration in the fortune of Imperial Rome. "Prosperity," Gibbon declares, "ripened the principle of decay; the causes of destruction multiplied with the extent of conquest, and as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports, the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight." In the Antonine Age, "it was scarcely possible that the eyes of contemporaries should discover in the public felicity the latent causes of decay and corruption." But "this long peace, and the uniform government of the Romans, introduced a slow and secret poison into the vitals of the Empire." If peace and prosperity breed such evils, the prime function of the statesman must be to guard against these symptoms of decay which, if he cannot quite eradicate, he will at least seek to check by keeping alive, so far as possible, the military and political ethos of a primitive polity.

VII

If we are so far right in our estimate of Gibbon's mind, we must conclude that for him the defence of civilization means, in substance, a defence of the *status quo*. This being so, it is not hard to understand why he should have entertained little sympathy for the idea of progress, the doctrine proclaimed by Turgot in his famous Sorbonne lectures of 1750, that mankind is by some inevitable compulsion driven forever onward toward a goal of "infinite perfectibility." That doctrine left Gibbon, as it left Hume, quite cold. It is, indeed, true that he paid a gesture of respect to what was rapidly becoming the dominant faith of the century when he declared at the conclusion of his *Observations* that "we may acquiesce in the pleasing conclusion, that every age . . . has increased, and still increases, the real wealth, the happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue, of the human race." But the

evidence by which he reaches this pleasing conclusion is, to say the least, inconclusive: the fact that certain rudimentary arts and crafts, like hardy plants, survive the tempest of social and political disintegration, or that cannibalism, "the horrid repasts of the Laestrigons," have never been revived on the coasts of Italy. Gibbon's real concern, however, is not with a hypothetical future of perfect secular felicity but rather with the actualities of contemporary society; it is to discover, if he can, whether the foundations of existing European civilization are secure. And on this point he allows himself no serious doubt. "It may safely be presumed," he ventures, "that no people, unless the face of nature is changed, will relapse into their original barbarism"... "the inestimable gifts [of civilization] have been successively propagated, they can never be lost." For, he argues, and here we may discern the underlying materialism of his thought, civilization in its ultimate analysis means the acquisition and transmission of techniques, the techniques of the arts, of war, of commerce, and of religion. Accordingly, he concludes, "Europe is secure from any future irruption of barbarians; since before they can conquer, they must cease to be barbarous." And, "should victorious barbarism carry slavery as far as the Atlantic ocean, ten thousand vessels would transport beyond its pursuit the remains of civilized society, and Europe would revive and flourish in the American world." Thus, despite his professed scepticism, Gibbon after all has his own gods, though their vast potential, whether for good or evil, was in his day but dimly suspected. They are our gods also, the gods of the industrial revolution and of the machine age. From this standpoint, all that is needed for the defence of civilization is to command, if possible to monopolize, the techniques. But, as we are now being painfully reminded, this is a game at which others, in whose purposes and methods we find something lacking, can also play.

VIII

Gibbon's work may be recommended as a salutary corrective to tendencies which were to emerge in subsequent historiography. I am not now thinking of the stuff produced by romanticism in its depraved and diseased form, a sample of which I have already offered in Weber's account of Commodus; but rather of those earlier and purer expressions of the romantic spirit such as are

to be found in the so-called Germanic school of history and jurisprudence, represented by Mommsen. Despite its massive proportions, Mommsen's *History of Rome* is vitiated by certain extravagances from which Gibbon is entirely free; the incipient racism of his *Völkerpsychologie* with its unjust disparagement of the Gallic spirit; the worship of power-politics coming out in his estimate of Julius Caesar as the one "entire and perfect man"; the apotheosis of process or movement for its own sake, resulting in a picture of Roman history as one long series of conflicts and struggles. Free from such extravagances, Gibbon is free also from the spell of concepts such as "East" and "West" with which his sturdy scepticism remains unsatisfied until he can translate them into intelligible terms, i.e., into terms of physical and moral causation. "The distinction between North and South," he observes, "is real and intelligible. . . . But the difference of East and West is arbitrary and shifts around the globe. As men of the North, not of the West, the legions of Gaul and Germany were superior to the south-eastern natives of Asia and Egypt. It is the triumph of cold over heat; which may, however, and often has been surmounted by moral causes." That is to say, he refuses to hypostasize the points of the compass.

In this as in other respects, the strength of Gibbon is that of his method, the method of experimental science. His work thus serves to illustrate the results to be achieved when (to recall Locke's metaphor) the mind's eye turns upon itself and makes itself its own object; in other words, the project of a science of history based on a science of human nature. And here the question of importance is not (as is now commonly assumed) whether Gibbon has been out-moded by the substitution of impersonal for personal, of extra-human, physical or material for moral and intellectual causes; whether, in short, it is things rather than men which shape the course of history. Put in this fashion as a flat antithesis, the question indeed seems to be quite without meaning. On the other hand, any attempt to weigh the relative importance of men and circumstances in the determination of events must surely be arbitrary. The study of history is the study of human activity and what confronts the historian when he undertakes to investigate any problem is a total situation in which, whatever be the factors that enter into and condition it, the efficient cause of action is and can be nothing ultimately but the human will. Accordingly,

it is no real criticism of Gibbon to denounce his interpretation as "personal" and "dramatic" or to complain, with certain of his modern critics, that he neglects "the great immanent forces that transcend individual emperors and movements of history."

On this point I should like not to be misunderstood. It is a perfectly legitimate enterprise to explore the springs of human activity whether in terms of psychological or physical motivation. It is equally legitimate to explore them on the hypothesis that they are nothing more than a group of conditioned reflexes. Ultimately, however, the question is what happens when the phenomena thus revealed to the eye of science are translated into terms of personal experience. But meanwhile we may freely recognize our debt to Gibbon for exhibiting the results to be achieved by following the logic of philosophic scepticism. These results we shall now try to summarize.

To begin with, the logic of scepticism yields a picture of human nature in which the individual as such possesses meaning only in relation to a hypothetical type. He is (as Aristotle would have put it) ἄνθρωπός τις, "a particular man." Thus envisaged, his particularity tends to be lost in his generality; and he emerges as soldier, statesman, man of affairs, tyrant or emperor. From this standpoint judgments about any particular man take the form of whether or not he acts, so to speak, in character; whether he conforms to or departs from the type in question. This type is *ipso facto* static; it has the immobility of a portrait. True indeed, an attempt is made to allow for movement by invoking the notion of "evolving content" as a necessary correlate to the idea or pattern; but the question remains: how far can new wine be poured into old bottles without risking a breakage? To illustrate, we may refer once more to the concept of Augustan excellence (*virtus Augusti*). This excellence is resolved, in the case of Augustus himself, into *virtus* (in the narrower sense of manliness or courage), *clementia*, *justitia* and *pietas*. The question is: how far can his successors afford to depart from these principles and still remain worthy of the empire? Or, to put the point otherwise, to what extent may a system based on Augustan excellence change without ceasing to be itself? Nothing is more interesting than to observe the slow but steady modification during the centuries in these governing conceptions on which depended the immense majesty of the Augustan peace; except perhaps it be the attitude displayed

by conservative or reactionary princes (like Julian the Apostate) toward what they branded as "innovation."

Gibbon's naturalism, like that of Hume, has two aspects. It is or claims to be (*a*) descriptive, offering a picture of the way men do in fact act, and (*b*) normative, supplying a basis for those judgments of value which constitute the essence of philosophic history. For the latter purpose, its usefulness depends on the role it assigns to reason in human life, whether as a principle of unification within the self or as a principle of concord and association among men. The role thus assigned to reason by the historian is to all intents and purposes absolute. It is in the light of this fact that certain of Gibbon's most characteristic prejudices are to be understood.

Of such prejudices, perhaps the most significant is that in favour of freedom, and especially "freedom of the mind," the "source of every generous and rational sentiment." What destroys this freedom are habits of credulity and submission. Its presence serves to account for those rare moments of felicity in human history when civilization attains a peak such as (according to Gibbon) occurs in the eighteenth century and occurred in its classical counterpart, the Antonine age.

But if Gibbon thus exaggerates the role of reason, he fails to do justice to the affections as an integral element in the constitution of human nature. Like the ancient Stoics', his ideal is that of the *inmota* or *inconcussa mens*, the mind which functions in proud independence of the passions. These passions—love, grief, fear, pity, anger—he treats indiscriminately as manifestations of enthusiasm, an enthusiasm which for him, as for Hume, is inconsistent with mental balance; and when he thinks of them, it is as phenomena which are somehow outside the rational, i.e., the essential self. In this connection, we may recall the picture of Gibbon himself as the half-hearted suitor "who sighed as a lover and obeyed as a son," and the amazing analysis which he offers of his own experience. "I understand by this passion the union of desire, friendship and tenderness which is inflamed by a single female, which prefers her to the rest of her sex and which seeks her possession as the supreme or sole happiness of our being."

The prejudices of philosophic scepticism serve to colour and to distort its judgments of value. These judgments are (as we have earlier pointed out) based on "reason" and "taste," a reason

and a taste which, while in fact merely cosmopolitan, claim to be universal and are by that very claim rendered vicious or defective. For what this means is that scepticism has identified the purely ephemeral values of a specific historical period with the permanent and essential conditions of human life. By this form of idolatry, it blinds itself to the true issues of history, since it sees as "corruption" any departure from the norms or conventions of its ideal society. For the same reason, its judgments are tainted with an inevitable relativity. At the same time, they are circular, since the fact is ignored that the ideals of any historical system are nothing more than the outward and visible expression of the wills which sustain it. The unrealistic character of Gibbon's value-judgments is nowhere more apparent than in his attitude to emperors like Gallienus and in his imperfect sense of the genuine novelty of situations with which that emperor and his contemporaries were required to deal. Accordingly, he fails to comprehend the measures adopted by princes of the third century in their efforts to reconstruct the defences, as well as to rehabilitate the administrative and fiscal system, of the Empire; above all, perhaps, the changes in the theory and practice of sovereignty to be inaugurated under Diocletian and Constantine. In these movements Gibbon saw, as he was bound by his logic to see, a progressive departure from the concept of civilization embodied in Augustan or Antonine Rome and thus nothing but evidences of "decline." At the same time, he failed to identify and diagnose the real sickness of imperial society, overlooking many possibilities—above all, perhaps, the profound confusions of mind and heart which troubled the world of Trajan, Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius, a sort of fifth column which was operating within *Romanitas* to lower the barriers and admit the advancing hordes of barbarism.

To say this is to point to limitations of insight on the part of Gibbon (rather than lack of such information as has since become available) as the true cause of such inadequacies as appear in his work. These limitations were the inevitable result of the method by which he tried to think, and to appreciate their true dimensions, we have only to translate his findings (as I have earlier suggested) into terms of personal experience. To do this is to perceive that in human activity there is not and cannot be any such exact correlation between stimulus and response as had been postulated by Hume. How a man will act in any concrete situation may

indeed (but only in the most general way) be anticipated from what is known of his temperament and habits, and that is more than often very little. But it is one thing to say this; quite another to assert that his action can be calculated in advance with any degree of precision or accuracy. I shall say nothing about the risk involved in imputing motives to another in order to "explain" his actions when it is notoriously so difficult to assess one's own. It is more important to notice that the psychology of experimental science fails to allow for growth or development either in the life of the individual or that of the race. For it is based on the assumption that the moral and psychological factors to be taken into account, however numerous and varied, are nevertheless fixed, unalterable and so, subject to classification under the general heads indicated by Hume, as though human nature contained no unsuspected potentialities and the future were to repeat in every detail the pattern of the past; a point of view from which experience loses much of its significance. So much for the anthropology of experimental science. We must conclude that it fails to do justice to the facts of history. But this is precisely what might have been expected from such a project as that of "anatomizing" human nature (to repeat Hume's phrase), since to anatomize human nature is to treat it as though it were dead.

The truth is that just as each and every actor in history is himself and no other so also the historical situation with which he is confronted is, properly speaking, unique. As Heraclitus had put it:-you cannot cross the same river a second time, since the very fact that it is the second makes it a different experience, or (in the words of the Christians) Christ died once and for all for our sins. The Roman analogue to Alexander may, indeed, seek to imitate Alexander by overrunning the East; but in so doing, he does not lose, he merely asserts, his character as Caesar, not as the Macedonian king. The experience which we thus describe as unique is, at the same time, organic and cumulative; as such it finds its place in the texture of a total life, the life both of the individual historical actor and of posterity. That is why the meaning of such experience is never exhausted so long as it is studied merely objectively as "behaviour"; i.e., in terms applicable to a *historia animalium*. It was a sense that human life consists of something more than a series of repetitive patterns, that its very essence is growth and development, which romanticism appears to have

grasped and which it sought, however blindly, to affirm and communicate. It was the same sense to which, in the nineteenth century, Hegel and Marx in turn tried to give meaning by resurrecting the classical concept of Becoming, and by describing Becoming, the one as the genesis of the idea through thesis, antithesis and synthesis, the other as the working of a dialectic in which the *logos* develops in and through the movement of matter. We may, indeed, be sceptical of these Hegelian or Marxist identifications, while nevertheless recognizing that the creative principle in human life is a moving principle, or a principle of motion no less than order and, therefore perhaps, ultimately incalculable in terms of classical science. To have missed this sense of movement or process was perhaps the greatest of Gibbon's limitations. Accordingly, we are not surprised to learn that Rousseau remarked of him, Mr Gibbon is not my man.

To us, then, the chief weakness of the *Decline and Fall* both as a work of art and as a study of history is that of a logic which misconceives the central problem of human nature, the problem of identity in change, and which offers no intelligible account of that sense of orderly movement in which the substance of personality is disclosed; a logic which, at the same time, misconceives the nature both of order and movement, by denying to movement any significance except within the limits of a preconceived and predetermined order. Failing in this, it sees history as essentially atomistic; the theatre of a conflict in which the forces of order (i.e., of reason) are pitted against those of disorder and anarchy (the life of vital impulse and emotion), but without the slightest prospect of final victory. If this, indeed, be the meaning of history, then history contains no promise of any substantial increase in wisdom and understanding, and belies all hope of genuine progress both for the individual and the race. It is thus that Gibbon reads history.

Happily, there is no need to accept his depressing conclusion. It is quite possible to reject the findings of experimental science and to make a fresh beginning from a less inadequate starting point. From this standpoint historical investigation will (on the factual level) take the fullest possible advantage of available techniques for discovering and assembling its data; and these techniques, it may be remarked, have improved vastly since Gibbon's day. On the level of presentation, it will seek with Gibbon to measure

up to the most exacting standards of logic and artistry. But finally, on the ultimate level of interpretation, it will abandon conventional illusions of scientific objectivity and will seek with the aid of sympathetic imagination, disciplined and controlled by the comparative study of peoples and cultures, to enter into and recover what it can of past experience, so far as this is possible within the narrow limits of human understanding; and this experience it will seek to "represent" in such a way as to convey something, at least, of its meaning to contemporaries. In this formidable undertaking the historian can ill afford to neglect any possible assistance; he will ignore at his peril the rich resources of language and literature.

From this standpoint we may perhaps venture a final judgment on Gibbon. If we have dwelt on his limitations rather than his merits, it is through no petty desire to disparage his immense achievement. On that score the fame for which he laboured is secure and it is folly to suppose that he will or ever can be superseded. Indeed, even to ask such a question is to be guilty of the presumption of demanding from him a kind of finality which is in fact denied to man-made reconstructions of historical truth. On the other hand, if we judge Gibbon's work, as indeed we must, to be a significant contribution to the living body of historical thinking, we shall assess it at something like its true worth and recognize that it is timeless because of its very timeliness. What Gibbon has to offer is an insight of priceless value into the mentality of the eighteenth century, by revealing so lucidly and vividly how that century saw its past. Accordingly, the permanent and essential value of his work is as literature. In saying this I do not for a moment admit that it ceases to be history.

AESTHETIC PATTERN IN KEATS'S ODES

HERBERT MARSHALL MCLUHAN

LESS than justice has been done to the great odes of Keats since they lend themselves so easily to the uses of his biographers. They have been so much quoted for casual illumination of his moods that few people are able to think of them as anything but self-expression. The highly successful labours of the editors and biographers, which no careful reader will ignore, have impressively established the fact that there is scarcely a mood or impression or image in the great odes which cannot be paralleled again and again in the least interesting of Keats's poems. There has, however, been only a small effort to point the obvious corollary from this fact; namely, that the high place which the odes have held in the regard of those who care for poetry is owing to qualities which they do not share with the bulk of Keats's poems—qualities of intense organization arising from the strict discipline of a critical intelligence. It is not the themes themselves, nor their private significance for Keats, but their immediate and successful realization in these odes, which is of decisive interest. The object of this paper is to show that the odes rise far above the level of self-expression, that they are fully realized works of art, and that each of them is organized upon its own independent principle. The *Ode to a Nightingale*, which is the most intensely organized of the group, is also the most difficult and varied, and so necessarily draws the main amount of attention here.

Before commencing a detailed consideration of this very subtle and varied poem, the reader may find it convenient to anticipate one conclusion concerning its basic movements. It is to be shown that there are two negative and two positive, or two "down" and two "up" movements of sense and rhythm, in the first four stanzas. (The first movement is "down"; the next, "up," and so on.) The fifth stanza, which contributes something unheard till that point, achieves a basis of stability after the violent oscillations of the preceding stanzas. In relation to the fifth stanza, the sixth and seventh stanzas give to the themes of the first four a wholly new mode of expression, leading with ease and inevitability to the resolution in "rational" wakefulness in the eighth. It is well, perhaps, to keep this, which is the "action" of the poem, in

mind while considering the rich details, whose varied interaction is the means by which this dramatic movement is realized.

Since the seventeenth century, language has been increasingly the handmaid of exposition and persuasion, until the general reader is merely baffled and annoyed by the quite different uses and arrangements of words which interest and concern the poet. So far, indeed, has the awareness of the non-expository and non-persuasive functions of language been lost that some analogy from the minor and neutral art of music is often helpful. In the case of these odes it is necessary to grasp that the relations between their parts rather resemble the internal structure of a fugue or a sonata than a paragraph of statements. An insight into this fact is quite as relevant to the understanding of works so diverse as *King Lear* or *At the round earth's imagin'd corners*. It would, of course, be futile to try to imagine the *Ode to a Nightingale* as a piece to be set to music, because the theme is so vividly and variously realized that there is nothing left for music to do. In the very nature of things, words in a poem are capable of a much richer texture than non-significant musical phrases. This is the reason that not even a Debussy could attempt the interpretation of any poetry more complex than that of Verlaine or Louÿs. Similarly, Monteverdi is fully adequate to setting a Petrarch sonnet, but the dramatic lyrics of a Donne are too complexly articulated for any music but their own.

The central image or symbol of the *Ode to a Nightingale* is intimately, though not always explicitly, functional to the whole poem. The basic paradox of its beautiful song born of a harsh and brutal persecution is integral to the tensions which constitute the dramatic power of the poem; but this major paradox or conflict naturally gives rise to others, as at the very outset where the heavy, depressive, and negative movement of the lines is the effect of "being too happy in thine happiness." This theme is in its turn intimately associated with the paradox that ideal or disembodied beauty is richer in ontological content than actual life with its defeats and deprivations and "leaden-eyed despairs." It is in terms of these paradoxes that "I have been half in love with easeful Death" gets its force and justification. The stark negation of death is viewed as a positive good ("rich to die"), not so much as an evasion of difficulties as a seemingly easy means of transmuting the leaden stuff of life into glorious beauty. The basic

reference is to the nightingale's song, which had its origin in this manner.

The paradoxes stated at the beginning of the last stanza occur on a different level and may conveniently be reserved for comment since they concern the dénouement of the poem. Perhaps it is unnecessary to say that the interest of all these paradoxes does not lie in their statement but in their rich dramatic realization, their "local habitation" within the poem. However, they are magnificently stated in *The Fall of Hyperion*:

> "None can usurp this height," returned that shade,
> "But those to whom the miseries of the world
> Are misery, and will not let them rest."

The same paradox, when it is stated in the *Ode on Melancholy*, sounds, in comparison, hollow and affected:

> Ay, in the very temple of delight
> Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine.

"Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter," is likewise less impressive. But this serves to indicate that there is something basically characteristic of Keats's artistic mode arising from his preoccupation with these paradoxes or conflicts in the very heart of experience. How very far he was from refusing to undertake their resolution with the full intellectual energy of a great artist has been quite insufficiently recognized. His merely personal efforts to resolve these teeming antinomies have, on the other hand, absorbed the main attention.

The Greek legend concerning the nightingale gets no explicit statement in the ode. But just how important the Greek atmosphere of this legend is for the poem is indicated by the recurrence of images rich in Greek associations: "hemlock," "Lethewards," "Dryad," "Flora," "Hippocrene," "Bacchus." Here, of course, is no conflict with the evidence produced by Mr Finney that Keats is aware of the medieval tradition of the nightingale as a "happy" bird, the sponsor of sensuous pleasure. This facet of the nightingale symbol sustains rather than annuls the paradox which is the basic dramatic tension of the poem and gets its statement in "Singest of summer in full-throated ease."

I

> *My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains*
> *My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,*

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

The *Ode to a Nightingale* opens with a slow, poignant urgency reaching its deepest depression at "sunk." It is merely by conscious metaphor that one speaks of these first four lines as a "down" or "negative" movement, but the imagery of the lines is so pervasively concerned with specific means and modes of death and oblivion as to deserve the description. At the very outset, however, it should be clear that the powerful negation of these lines and their explicit mention of deadly "hemlock" are part of a poem which is profoundly vital in all its parts. There is no trace of debility in the art even though the ostensible theme may be that of a suicidal swoon.

The low point of "sunk," with its heavy rhymed emphasis, is no sooner reached than the movement and sense shift slowly upwards with "too happy in thine happiness," from the heavy visceral sensations of the first part of the stanza to the delightful visual and auditory life of "melodious plot" and "full-throated ease." This, the first "up" movement, grows with complete probability from "being too happy in thine happiness." The poem is plausibly committed to a swinging between extreme moods by thus referring it to this universal human commonplace.

II

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim—

The second stanza sustains the joyous note on which the first ends, carrying joy to sensual excess, and thus naturally reintro-

ducing the note of negation. The joy of the first stanza is associated with the superior senses of eye and ear. Significantly, the second stanza evokes delight by extreme stress on the lower senses of taste and touch, concluding with the vivid Bacchic image of excess in "purple-stained mouth." The same symbol occurs more obliquely in "Joy's grape" in the last stanza of the *Ode on Melancholy*. The frequent recurrence of such themes and images in all the odes is artistically significant, representing, as it does, the achievement of a patterned economy, a possibility of more concise and disciplined achievement than Keats had hitherto had at command. Such recurrence, far from obscuring the individuality of the odes, should lead to an appreciation of their differences.

The very excess of sensual joy in wine and dance leads naturally through the symbol of wine as a means of heightening life to the use of wine as a means of evading life. All the images of the poem act and interact, and re-act in this way, so that to give more than a few hints and examples would be as interminable as it should be unnecessary. "Being too happy in thine happiness" is the ostensible motive of the first or opening "down" movement of the poem. The second "down" movement develops at the end of the second stanza from an analogous excess of joy in sensual life.

III

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

The third stanza elaborates this second extreme of depression in a climax of gloomy hyperboles. These dramatic hyperboles are the means of stressing the obverse of "Flora and the country green," their ultimate point being reached in the reflection that while Beauty is transient enough, yet the love it stimulates is even more so. This even negates any impulse to give permanence to Beauty. Life is thus completely rejected, since not only is it ugly and harsh, but its conditions are not altered even by the casual beauty which it seems to possess.

IV

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

The fourth stanza seems to leap upwards with a life which is born of the conclusive dialectic of the third. Its vitality is feverish, ecstatic, and quite unlike the first "up" movement. Having twice tasted the poignancy and despair of actuality, and having once tasted its joy, we are offered an escape, not through drugs or wine, "But on the viewless wings of Poesy." The sudden introduction of the life of "fancy" in vinous juxtaposition with "Bacchus and his pards" is significant, and the significance is underlined in the last stanza of the ode.

It is of a piece with the vigorous dramatic movement of the poem that Keats no sooner indicates an escape through the life of art than he embodies the concept in the warm and vivid life of "tender is the night," and the following two lines. The insubstantiability of the faery pageant, its inadequacy as a resource, is suggested by its brief evocation and the sudden relapse into "actuality":

But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown.

The lush delicacy of "tender is the night" is a natural transition from the hectic flight of the first four lines of the stanza. The sudden change of tone is perfectly adjusted by its appearing to be an achieved desire, the term of the movement of flight. Similarly, "But here there is no light," with its light stress on "here," is both a contrast with the world of moonlit fancy and a faint echo of "Here, where men sit and hear each other groan." But that grim theme now begins to merge with "verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways."

V

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

It is with this gesture of ineffable ease and delicacy that Keats begins the transmutation of the previous themes of profound revulsion from, and ardent pursuit of, life. The fifth stanza uninterruptedly expands a single moment of "negative capability." After the first two movements from extreme to extreme this stanza is without any strain or striving. The poet does not woo death, life, or art, but is, in a spirit of humility, wooed by nature. "I cannot see . . . but guess," perfectly conveys the abeyance and passivity of sensual life. The phrase "embalmed darkness" reinforces this mode of experience (perfectly linking it with the different but related "drowsy numbness" of the first stanza) by indicating the passivity of both human and sub-human womb-life. After violent waywardness the poet, as it were, plants himself in the spring-time earth, coming to a profound acceptance and understanding of nature. This is not stated, but is realized dramatically. The stanza unfolds in accordance with the "seasonable month" (which, we shall see, is the technical mode of the *Ode to Autumn*), following the order of developing life, and at the same time paralleling the maturing wisdom of the poet. This is the dramatic centre of the poem, and it clearly constitutes an equilibrium born of previous conflicts. It is as inevitably right as it is unexpected.

VI

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

"Darkling I listen," beginning the sixth stanza, continues the sensual passivity of the previous one. "Darkling" echoes both "embalmed darkness" in the fifth, and "here there is no light" in the fourth stanza, with its striking notion of "creature of the dark," and is indicative of the extremely close-knit texture of the poem, the merging and re-merging of basic themes. The themes developed in the first four stanzas now recur in the last three, with modifications which are related to the stabilization achieved in the fifth. The phrase "half in love" is significant of the new mode, the measure and restraint which is imposed on themes that previously were expressed in extremes. Thus in "with easeful Death" and "mused rhyme" one notes a harmonious conjunction and assimilation of the themes of depression (from the first stanza) and the flight on the "wings of Poesy" (from the fourth). That is, the first "down" movement and the second "up" movement recur together as a new thing.

In an excellent chapter of *Revaluation*, Mr Leavis makes a passing reference to "easeful Death" in this stanza as a clearly defined mode of nostalgia which expresses Keats's longing for his mother. That longing for "easeful Death" is implicated with such emotion in actual life, few would deny. "To cease upon the midnight with no pain" carries unmistakably the figurative force of a child or lover on the breast of mother or beloved. There is an obvious correlation with the sonnet *Bright Star*, which was written a few days earlier than this ode. Without setting aside this fact, the significance of the phrase is really defined in the poem by its multiple associations with the "embalmed darkness" in the fifth stanza. Thus the mere negative nostalgia of "easeful Death" is strongly modified by its being linked through "soft names" and "quiet breath" with the "negative capability" of the fifth stanza. It is this fact which makes "rich to die" artistically plausible; and, as the last line, "To thy high requiem become a sod," emphatically stresses, it is not physical death that seems "rich" to the poet. In the heavy, rhymed stress on "sod" with all its negative associations of absence, loss, decay, the poet strikes a strong note of rebellion against physical death. This gives us the theme of the seventh stanza.

VII

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

The sixth stanza having taken up and modified the themes of the first and fourth, the seventh now resumes the themes of the second and third. The grim picture of actual life in the third stanza is seen again for an instant in "No hungry generations tread thee down." It seems not to have been noticed about this line, that it is a very neat statement of the Malthus-Ricardo population theories, which shocked a great many people in the early nineteenth century. "Emperor and clown," "Ruth" and "faery lands" represent widely separated ages which somewhat correspond to the similar evocation of different civilizations in the second stanza: "Flora," "country green," "Provençal," and "Hippocrene." In the second stanza this nostalgic time-sense is expressed with vigorous enthusiasm. Here it is modified both by the "hungry generations" and by the "born for death" theme, which has grown out of the sixth stanza.

Close attention to the development of the stanzas has left little opportunity for comment on their interweaving with the song of the nightingale. An earlier remark about it is paradoxically used in these last three stanzas. In the last line of the sixth stanza "high requiem" and "sod" are strongly counterpointed. The same mode is pursued in the seventh with the "immortal Bird." "Immortal" being used as well in the sense of "glorious" and "imperishably beautiful," gives the whole line some such force as "You were not born to defeat and evasion and nostalgia, but to sing deathlessly." It is only by taking "death" in its simplest physical sense, and thus disregarding its modification by the sixth stanza, that "immortal" offers any difficulty. Its deathless and invariable song is counterpointed with "this passing night" and all the nights that pass over "emperor and clown" and "Ruth" and the medieval knights ("faery lands").

The celebrated "magic casements, opening on the foam Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn" reintroduce, but in a new and significant way, the flight on the "viewless wings of Poesy" to the "Queen-Moon" and her "starry Fays," preparatory to the last stanza. Both in the fourth and in the seventh stanzas this flight to an ethereally enchanted "faery land" is explicitly related to the compelling beauty of the nightingale's song. In this stanza, however, the "faery lands" are "forlorn." Just as in the previous stanza the earlier death motif is checked by "sod," so here the unrestrained pleasures of fancy in the fourth stanza are moderated by "perilous" and "forlorn." The tempting baits and lures of the merely aesthetic life have been implicitly repudiated in the profound acceptance of the fifth stanza. Some editors have noted how "forlorn" in this poem seems to echo "desolate" in the fourth stanza of the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. In the latter poem "desolate" does, indeed, occur, as here, just before the poet makes an explicit repudiation of the merely aesthetic life.

VIII

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

The opening of the eighth stanza almost insists on the delusiveness of the life of fancy. When the poet returns to "actuality" for the third or fourth time in this poem, it is to comment ironically that "the fancy cannot cheat so well As she is fain'd to do, deceiving elf." "Elf" makes explicit the relation between his fanciful view of the nightingale's song and "faery lands forlorn" and "starry Fays." The rather overly-rational complications of the judgment on "fancy" is another way of underlining a change of tone. The poem is now, for the first time, at the level of explicit rationality, and it is at this level that the resolution of the conflicting claims of all the other modes of life in the poem is effected.

We are made aware of the basic conflicts of the poem in the

first line of the eighth stanza where there is something utterly paradoxical in "toll me back," as though returning to life were actually death. It is as though in putting away the moods he has elaborately built around the song of the nightingale he were burying his spirit, as though the "sole self" which remains were a mere husk. "To thy high requiem become a sod" is the obverse of this conflict. Only in the eighth stanza it is the "requiem" or "plaintive anthem" which dies and is "buried deep," and Keats who returns to "life." In the fourth and sixth stanzas it is Keats who flees the world or thinks of ceasing "upon the midnight with no pain," and in the eighth it is the nightingale which ceases and Keats who returns: "Fled is that music." The "meaning" of this poem is only to be apprehended in terms of this complex structure and the reverberation and interaction of its delicately modulated themes.

As the song fades and "actuality" presses in once more, it is not, this time, some dramatically visioned phase of life such as is presented in the third stanza, but the world of rational wakefulness. The way in which this is conveyed by the literal accuracy of observation of the movements of the bird is exquisitely right: "Past the near meadows, over the still stream, Up the hill-side." "Do I wake or sleep?" implies the depth of absorption, the exclusive attraction of what has preceded it, and thus betokens an abrupt shift of tone and attention which constitutes the resolution of the tensions.

* * *

It seemed best to give rather full consideration to the *Ode to the Nightingale*, and thus to suggest the lines along which the other odes should be read, rather than to deal with them all briefly. There now remains space for only the most general comment on the organization of the *Ode on a Grecian Urn* and the *Ode to Autumn*.

The *Ode on a Grecian Urn* has a central symbol which is much more limited than that of the nightingale. For all that, this ode likewise realizes the dramatic intention of the poet by means of a similar modulation of tones and rhythms which are in strict relation to the modes of contemplating the urn. The ode opens with a slow ritual movement suggesting enrapt gazing. This is suddenly interrupted by a series of abrupt and dramatic questions which convey more than a slight note of doubt and alarm. The

note recurs in the fourth stanza as the poet develops the mood of desolation.

There are three basic themes involved in this ode, and they are of equal importance. The first is that of pastoral, with all its implications of rural and romantic peace and beauty. Pastoral offers a conventional escape for hearts "high-sorrowful and cloy'd"; the sophisticated have often cultivated it. The second theme, less explicit, is that of pagan culture under the sentimental aspect of its superiority to the current code—its freedom from complexity and dogma. Significantly, this conventional theme serves Keats's purpose in "discrediting" the urn as an escape; for "what maidens loth" and "that heifer lowing at the skies" strike a grim sacrificial note which is not to be mistaken. The third theme is also nostalgic: the life of aesthetic contemplation offered by the urn. In the artistic organization of the poem they are given alternate stress, and their tensions are relaxed in the last stanza by what can only be called an outright rejection of all three modes of escape.

An interval of but three months separates these odes from the *Ode to Autumn*. Apropos of the remarkable stabilizing function of the fifth stanza of the *Ode to a Nightingale*, it was observed that the stability was achieved not by espousal or rejection of life, nor by affirmation nor negation, but by a mode of being which Keats, himself, called "negative capability." Keats's definition of this phrase is especially relevant to the *Ode to Autumn*: ". . . when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason."

Just as in the fifth stanza of the *Ode to a Nightingale* Keats plants himself in the springtime earth, so in the *Ode to Autumn* he seems to have reached fruition. "Ripeness is all" could certainly be its epigraph. There are no superficial conflicts or tensions in this ode. The ideal and the actual are one, and the restless spirit of the poet seems to be completely absorbed by the object of contemplation.

The dramatic movement or action of the poem appears to follow the process of natural growth. The three phases correspond to the three stanzas. Instead, however, of oscillating "up" and "down" movements, there is in this ode a single motion of expanding awareness from vegetable immobility to expressive and vital consciousness. In richly presenting these aspects of created being for immediate enjoyment, Keats makes his most mature comment.

The first stanza is remarkable for the rich suggestions of inner, hidden life and the aura of facts related to gestation. Reinforcing this, the point of view adopted by the poet is from within the cottage. There is here a world of rich organic and tactual awareness, but no suggestion of bodily movement.

The second stanza opens with a vigorous rhythm inviting us to "seek abroad." There is a recurring insistence on physical movement and posture carrying us well beyond the gentle undulating rhythms of the gestation stanza. It is not all motion, of course; for the finest effects concern a delicate indolence of motions which are halted as soon as hinted at.

The last stanza expands into a fully orchestrated expressiveness on the theme of triumphant fruition and fulfilment. Music is the mode, the basic and unifying image of the stanza. Keats reserves the full power of his verse and the full scope of his images of contrapuntal sensation for the realization of autumn. The transience of this beauty does not grieve the poet: Ripeness is all.

The rather wilful habit of supposing all Keats's odes to be concerned with escape rather than the rejection of escape has probably been encouraged by the escape of his early death, but even more by reading Keats through the media of his successors, Rossetti, Swinburne, Pater, and Tennyson. These were preoccupied with a dream-world, and they were influenced by Keats; but they had only a small share of that artistic toughness of fibre which made Keats finally reject anything less than a total view of his experience. It is just such a totality, the escapes, their attractiveness, their futility, and their rejection, which is the concern of these odes. The odes have no message. They are actions. Conflicts occur in the very nature of the themes, and Keats develops and resolves them dramatically within the limits which they themselves impose.

HUME'S THEORY OF IMAGINATION

HAROLD TAYLOR

EARLY in the present century Professor Norman Kemp Smith developed the idea that the "establishment of a purely naturalistic conception of human nature by the thorough subordination of reason to feeling and instinct, is the determining factor of Hume's philosophy." Since then several more studies of Hume have revealed a growing emphasis on positive elements in his naturalism, in correction of the traditional view of Hume as primarily a phenomenalist and self-defeating sceptic.[1]

In this paper, I propose to accept Professor Smith's interpretation of Hume, and to show that the key to Hume's naturalism lies in his theory of the imagination; that when the faith in imagination as a genuine creative faculty breaks down, his naturalism disintegrates; that the breakdown of Hume's faith in imagination is a result of the influence on him of contemporary rationalistic dogma.

I

It is a common historical fact that the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophers retained most of the traditional Aristotelian psychology, and considered the faculty of imagination to be the source of error, the creator of illusion, and the opponent of clear reasoning.[2] Its sterility was emphasized while its positive

[1]N. K. Smith, "The Naturalism of Hume" (*Mind*, n.s., 14, 1905, 149-73, 335-47). Among later studies: C. W. Hendel, *Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume* (1925); Hugh Miller, "The Naturalism of Hume" (*Philosophical Review*, XXXVIII, 1929, 469-82); R. E. Hobart, "Hume without Scepticism" (*Mind*, n.s. XXXIX, 1930, 273-301, 409-25); J. Laird, "Hume's Account of Sensitive Belief" (*ibid.*, n.s. XLVIII, 1939, 427-45); N. K. Smith, "David Hume, 1739-1939" (*Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, supplement to vol. XVIII, 1939, i-xxxiv).

[2]Malebranche: "... there are few more general causes of error among men than this dangerous reporting of the imagination" (trans. from *Œuvres*, Paris, 1842, II, 176); Spinoza: "... how easily men may fall into grave errors through not distinguishing between the imagination and the understanding" (see *Works*, trans. Elwes, II, 33); Hobbes: "Imagination, therefore, is nothing but decayed sense" (*Leviathan*, chap. 11). *See* D. F. Bond, "The Neo-classical Psychology of Imagination" (*E. L. H.*, IV, 1937, 245-63), and M. W. Bundy, *The Theory of Imagination in Classical and Mediaeval Thought* (University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, 1927).

value as a means of providing the reason with alternative concepts and ideas in the process of thought was left unheeded. In the convenient classification of the faculties of mind, reason was conceived to work most accurately in isolation from the imagination. It is admitted that occasionally one can refer to some pattern of ideas which the imagination picks out of the mass of material retained in the memory, but one can never be certain that the concept so produced is an accurate and true datum for reality. Its departmental task among the faculties was to produce objects like the head of a man on the body of a horse.

For Hume, however, the function of imagination is to give real images of past perceptions which we can relate to present ones. Instead of the wild product of dreams, deliriums, deceptions, and hallucinations, the imagination in Hume's conception normally has an issue of real ideas, true perceptions, and natural beliefs. The mistake which Hume saw in his contemporaries, lay in believing that the faculty functions independently of custom, habit, and determinate forces in its environment. Though the imagination, considered as a kind of fancy, may seem free to juggle ideas in a variety of ways, Hume discovered that actually it operates in a regular manner, according to certain conditions of human nature and natural instinct. Seventeenth-century philosophers, critics, and essayists emphasized the arbitrary, or abnormal function of imagining; Hume considered it a natural function of the mind, and the most important faculty which man possesses. In most cases, he refers to the arbitrary imagination as the fancy.[3]

The imagination, according to Hume, is nothing but a natural instinct by means of which certain true ideas are rendered lively and intense. These qualities in true ideas are all we have to distinguish between truth and falsehood. The fact that some ideas acquire the qualities of liveliness, intensity and vitality is due to the principle of experience, which "instructs me in the several conjunctions of objects for the past," and the principle of habit which "determines me to expect the same for the future," both working on the imagination, which in turn works on the ideas. In calling to mind certain ideas from memory, or in judging upon the reality of present perceptions, we rely upon the imagination to render those ideas true and real by lending to them the "truth"

[3]Imagination in this sense is used in the *Treatise*, ed. Selby-Bigge, pp. 108, 123. All numbers in brackets are references to this edition.

qualities by which we recognize them. In this way we get an unavoidable *strong* propensity to consider objects *strongly* as being true, and find that "the memory, senses, and understanding, are therefore all of them founded on the imagination or the vivacity of our ideas" (p. 265). The function of imagination is to provide the mind with the means by which it can get conviction in belief concerning matters of fact.

The mind is possessed of no faculty of reason which perceives objects in reality clearly and distinctly by its own intuitions; rather, experience and habit, working with the imagination, force the understanding to accept some ideas as true, by the sheer vivacity which the imagination gives to them. One cannot call these lively and forcible ideas illusions. Certain imaginary ideas are, of course, fictional in the usual sense; we can get no impression of them in experience. But those ideas which by a strong propensity of the imagination are rendered forcible cannot be considered unreal or illusory, since their reality does not depend on how the reason judges, but on how the organism *feels* about them. It is by this concept that Hume's scepticism is limited. His criticisms of contemporary epistemology are directed against the notion of a conventional eighteenth-century reason, reason conceived as a unique attribute of man, a divine light, a faculty capable of intellectual intuition. His criticisms do not affect the validity of *belief* in the true and real, but only the absolute logical necessity of metaphysical principles of truth and reality. Belief, in Hume's view, is an alogical process, the result of customary effects of an environment upon a perceiving organism.

In adopting such a view, Hume is forced to add that there must be a distinction made in the imagination between the principles which are "permanent, irresistible, and universal,...and the principles which are changeable, weak, and irregular.... The former are the foundation of all our thoughts and actions, so that upon their removal, human nature must immediately perish and go to ruin" (p. 225). The permanent principles of the imagination are those basic instinctive beliefs which we get automatically from the dynamic inter-connection which exists between the perceiving mind and its external objects. The conjunction of objects in certain relations in an external world has a natural effect upon the perceiving mind, and although we cannot logically infer the existence of permanent relations in that external world or cannot presume the certainty that objects will behave in that con-

junctive way in the future, by means of the imagination we gain possession of permanent, irresistible beliefs by which we can guide our conduct and our reasonings. The principles which are changeable, weak, and irregular are those caused by the "inclination in human nature, to bestow on external objects the same emotions, which it observes in itself." Thus we get the substantial forms, occult faculties, and fictions of accident and substance of the "antient philosophers,"—we mistake these for genuine principles of the imagination.

For purposes of definition, Hume distinguishes between imagination and the judgment or reason, between imagination and the memory, although the three are connected by the effects of custom. In the case of the former antithesis, it occurs when the judgment corrects the folly of imaginary ideas by the introduction of new factors of relevance (e.g., the instance of the man in the cage in a high tower, where the judgment attempts to dismiss the cause of alarm by the reminder that there is adequate support for the cage [p. 148]. There are general rules which may help to confine the imagination to concepts acceptable to judgment.). In the case of memory, Hume's distinction is more ambiguous, since in general the memory and imagination are working together instinctively, the imagination being usually an energized form of memory capable of projecting its ideas and co-ordinating them. In order to separate them schematically, Hume says that the ideas of memory are stronger, steadier, because they reproduce the arrangement of the original perceptions. That distinction has no logical foundation in his scheme however, and breaks down in practice. Memory and imagination are identical in function; a better distinction between them would be that the latter has an active or creative power which memory has not.

To summarize: The imagination for Hume is defined in functional terms; it works as a unifying agent for the impressions of sense and the ideas of reflection; when opposed to reason it is fancy; when opposed to memory its ideas are of less strength, less orderliness; when joined with both, it supplies the foundation of belief by lending qualities of liveliness and intensity to true ideas, and thus to true propositions; it transcends the present and the past, co-ordinating ideas to give expectancy of certain regularities in the future; by its propensity to synthetize, it provides the possibility of a conception of causation, of objectivity, indeed of the entire system of the external world.

II

The notion of the human reason as a transcendental faculty capable of the clear and distinct perception of truth of complete certainty was the predominant conception of eighteenth-century philosophy. Reason was primarily an instrument of intellectual vision. Hume held that relations between ideas known by the demonstrative reason were known in this way, and that the conventional definition could apply to certain modes of apperception. That kind of intellectual activity produced *knowledge*. But except for a few tautological propositions, the relations of quantity, and the objects of immediate experience, Hume held that it is impossible to know anything with complete certainty.[4] The reason, he said, is not a unique faculty peculiar to man alone, but is an unintelligible instinct shared by all animals, by means of which it is possible to make inferences from experience. Reasoning about matters of fact is not concerned with an intellectual intuition of the agreement and disagreement of ideas, but is, rather, an instinct, giving an unavoidable belief in the reality of objects inferred to be attached to certain ideas in the mind by the constant conjunction of the objects with the ideas in past experience.

In contrast to the earlier rationalistic concepts, Hume's view of reason implies an organic philosophy which considers the mind a focal point for various organic functions, of which reasoning and imagining are but two. The formation of beliefs and judgments is as natural and unavoidable as breathing and walking. It accompanies animal life. It consists in the conscious and continuous adaptation of the human organism to things as they are, and is expressed in a manner of behaviour (in both physical and mental activity) rather than in a mode of intellectual intuition. So much is indicated by Hume's use of the concept of custom and the effect it has upon the association of ideas in memory, imagination, and reason.

Consequently the traditional criterion of knowledge, that of the clarity and distinctness of an idea or principle, is rejected. That criterion may serve for our certainty in *knowledge*, but for

[4]The notion of certainty requires constant qualification. Hume says, "There are many different kinds of certainty, and some of them as satisfactory to the mind, though perhaps not so regular as the demonstrative kind" (*Letters of Hume*, ed. J. Y. T. Greig, I, 185).

matters of fact Hume relies upon the psychological force (liveliness, intensity, etc.) with which an impression or idea is communicated to the brain. It is the strength of the feeling experienced by the observer which determines the validity of perception. "When we are convinced of any matter of fact, we do nothing but conceive it along with a certain feeling different from what attends the mere *reveries* of imagination" (p. 624). The reason then cannot have its clear and distinct perceptions independently of the imagination; the faculties work together, the reason criticizing and reflecting, the imagination suggesting, synthetizing, organizing.

Another difficulty which Hume finds in the rationalist's conception of reason is that when defined as an intellectual faculty, it is too weak, too prone to make fallacious deductions, too slow in operation to be valuable as an instrument for obtaining knowledge of matters of fact. Define it as a rational activity and we find ourselves forced to the illogical inference that there is a rational ground for its operation in the external world. Since we cannot discover such ground in the world, to assure ourselves of an external reality we must simply take advantage of the "presumptions" of the imagination. The analytic reason, being unable to create a new idea, or even to progress logically from one perception to the next within the mind, must depend for its coherent beliefs on the instinctive behaviour of the organism and on the unavoidable presumptions of the imagination.

Such dependence and such close co-ordination between the two faculties is a result of the fact that both systems of ideas, those from the imagination and those from the reason, are the effects of custom operating on the mind by the constant conjunction of objects in the external world. Since custom "has no influence, but by enlivening the imagination, and giving us a strong conception of any object" (p. 149), it may be said that custom works *on* the reason, *through* the imagination. Consequently it is sometimes difficult to distinguish one faculty from the other, since both function by means of indications given in the lively quality of ideas.

III

This ambiguity has led to considerable difficulty in understanding Hume's distinction between imaginary and real ideas, between true and false beliefs. For if we have nothing in reason

but the liveliness of ideas to determine the validity of belief, how are we to know that in any given instance we are not dealing with imaginary objects and ideas, rather than with real ones? Hume's attempt to answer this question occupies a great part of the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry*, and was the most important problem connected with his theory of imagination. Hume's final answer is that true belief concerning matters of fact rests with the *manner* of conceiving an idea or an object, and is expressible in terms of a feeling associated with the true idea. The adjectives by which Hume describes this feeling are comparative: the feeling is stronger, livelier, more vivid, firmer, more intense, forcible, vivacious, coherent, and steady, than the looser conceptions of idle imagining. The imagination may join, mix, or vary patterns of ideas, and conceive any number of objects; but, *as a matter of fact*, it can never force the mind into the error of believing in their existence because it is impossible for the faculty to achieve an idea which the mind will conceive in the correct "belief manner." The imagination, as passive to customary arrangement of an accepted regularity in the external world, makes no mistakes. The imagination as active in the formation of fanciful ideas in various combinations makes no mistakes, because it is unable to create by itself the correct feeling of belief which is essential to the acceptance of any true idea. Hume admits that his attempt to describe the feeling of belief itself is inadequate and unphilosophical, but adds that everyone understands its application to common life, since we use such belief as the governing principle of all our actions.

In other words, *custom* is again the operative concept. For if by any illusion we are led to believe that hypogriffs exist in the external world, and we even manage to get the correct "truth feeling" attached to the illusion, we can criticize its validity by relating it to normal experience. To this end, Hume cites eight rules by which "to judge of cause and effect" (p. 173), stressing the importance of the constant conjunction of objects, and persistent observation of them through new experiments. In the case of a lively imagination which is abnormally active as a result of an "extraordinary ferment of the blood and spirits," a kind of madness ensues, and it is impossible to distinguish true from false ideas. But that is the abnormal case. We can establish certain norms of experience which will correct false beliefs, and if we make mistakes in border-line cases, that is simply a mark of the limi-

tations of the human reason, not a refutation of the theory of belief. It is possible that many of the beliefs which we hold are prejudiced, even though accompanied by the most powerful conviction. In this case, it may be custom which has formed the basis for a wrong conception, or it may be that customs conflict, and that the norm of truth is based on insufficient evidence. Analytic reason may correct prejudiced belief, or further experience may invalidate the prejudice. In either case, the only solution is in critical observation of more instances. Otherwise, the prejudice will remain static, being unaware of itself as prejudice.

IV

It is at this point that the imagination and reason as co-ordinate faculties begin to separate and to function independently, even to the point of opposition. Having achieved the co-ordination of discrete perceptions due to the effects of custom, the imagination presents certain conclusions concerning continuity, causation, and the like, to the reason. The reason then has the task of rejecting or accepting, on the grounds of the psychological concomitants of the ideas themselves, their truth and falsehood. In this way, conflicts sufficient to throw the mind into a dilemma are set up between the two faculties. Which of the faculties can one trust? Suppose the natural belief in the identity of the self, the independence of the external world, the necessary connection of events, and the continuity of perception, is guaranteed by the propensive quality of the imagination, yet is denied by the reason? We have a lively feeling about the idea of self-identity; yet we have an equally lively feeling that experience is composed of discrete units of perception, incoherent as to a continuum. It is impossible to determine which of these feelings is the livelier or truer, the one from imagination or the one from reason. They each have what Professor Laird calls the full "conviction-coefficient." The law of contradiction denies us the possibility of accepting both feelings at once, and philosophy defeats itself by its own analysis.

What Hume did not see was that both lively feelings can be accepted as true beliefs. Indeed, both may be the product of that propensity of the imagination to give correct pictures of the external world. They are not contradictory, but are complementary, depending on context for their verification. If we

consider the question of the nature of immediate perception as a question concerning matters of fact, we have Hume's own word that the contradiction of the atomic conception of experience is conceivable. When we turn from empirical observation of the effects of custom to introspective analysis, we may perhaps discover a string of isolated impressions for whose coherence there is no logical justification. But the logical justification is now superfluous, since the coherence under Hume's theory of imagination is already an accomplished fact. Hume's sceptical dilemma occurs as the result of two eighteenth-century rationalistic assumptions to which he subscribed: (1) that a Newtonian atomism (which seems analogous to Hume's conception of physical points constituting space and time[5]) is applicable to the field of mental experience and is an *a priori* rule for sense perception; (2) that knowledge as clear and distinct apprehension of complete certainty is the only "philosophical" knowledge, and as such is the only kind which can be ultimately satisfactory in philosophical discourse.

This latter assumption results in an inconsistency in Hume's conception of imagination and reason. For the most part he means to use the faculties in their naturalistic and functional sense, as the two most important forms of the adaptation of the human organism to the external world; in other contexts they are rationalistic and categorical.[6] The role which the naturalistic reason and imagination play is co-ordinate, as outlined above. The rationalistic reason, when it criticizes the irrational, instinctive principles of imagination (causation, necessary connection, continuity, etc.) on the ground that they are alogical, is introducing a new criterion which is now irrelevant. The reason interferes by the introduction of self-evident principles concerning atomism and true philosophical knowledge. Reason and imagination are then opposed in the traditional eighteenth-century manner, and Hume is forced to a self-defeating scepticism by his retreat into rationalism. The two faculties ultimately destroy each other. The lesson which that destruction teaches is that one cannot apply demonstrative reasoning to matters of fact—a point which Hume himself was anxious to make on many occasions.

[5]See N. K. Smith, "David Hume, 1739-1939," *loc. cit.*, p. xiv, where Smith relates Hume's doctrine of space and time to P. Bayles's discussion of the problem.

[6]The two uses are illustrated by the opposition of the terms *nature* and *reason*, described as two enemies: "Nature is obstinate and will not quit the field, however strongly attacked by reason . . ." (*Treatise*, p. 215).

V

This involves the question as to whether Hume's distinction between demonstrative and moral reasoning is justified. If belief consists in the manner of conception, if the imagination works with the reason to give a high degree of probability to ideas holding the correct truth qualities, why is it not possible to extend that manner of conception to include the absolute certainty of relations of quantity? Is not the manner of conception in demonstrative reasoning comparable to that involved in moral reasoning? Do we not get the same intensity of belief in connection with the proposition 2 plus 2 equals 4 that we do in the proposition, There is a table in this room? The distinctive attribute of demonstrative certainty is that the contradiction of its propositions is inconceivable. Which means that we support the proposition by an intuitive belief in the law of contradiction as self-evident. We do not need an intellectual faculty of reason, as distinct from sense, to give us certainty in relations of quantity, but the same natural instinct of imagination and reason which is concerned with belief in matters of fact will serve. We discover the truth of analytic propositions by the "mere operation of thought." The fact that they may have a universal validity "without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe" does not mean that the feeling accompanying their presentation to the mind is different in *kind* from the feeling accompanying synthetic propositions. The indubitable character of mathematical proof may, within the scheme of Hume's theory of belief, rest ultimately on a *manner* of conception, in this case one so conceived as to give complete certainty. Having begun a psychological account of the knowing process, Hume interrupts it to search for logical factors of formal validity. The consequent opposition of reason and imagination eliminates the natural role of the latter faculty from activity in the comparison of ideas, and represents an unnecessary dualism between the cogitative and the sensitive nature in Hume's account of the operations of reason.

It also represents the point at which Hume's naturalism ends. His description of the natural process of cognition has, he fears, an unphilosophical, vulgar, commonsense basis. He yields to "illicit rationalistic cravings" for a philosophical, logical, or academically

respectable epistemology, with the result that the thorough-going positivism toward which his method leads is finally betrayed.

Not, however, before the naturalistic import of his philosophy is adequately realized. The elements of an organic philosophy do emerge, in the doctrine of a natural productive imagination, in the concept of custom and of habit, and in the theory of sensitive belief. When we examine carefully the radical scepticism of Hume's philosophy, we find that Hume was concerned not so much with the denial of the possibility of human knowledge, or the genuine connection of objects in the external world, as with the refutation of certain dogmas and superstitions in contemporary rationalism concerning final causes, necessary connection, and supernatural entities. We can only regret that this scepticism did not go still further.

THE FUTURE OF A CONSERVATIVE PARTY

DANA PORTER

A POLITICAL party consists of a group of co-ordinating individuals who are agreed on a general direction and conception of policy. The rise of a party begins with a common motive inspired by a progressive idea. As the spirit of the time undergoes its inevitable unfolding development, a party retains its hold upon public favour so long as the progressive idea behind it grows in harmony with the social and political temper. Political parties in Canada that have succeeded in attaining power, have maintained generally a long term of ascendancy; for the idea that in the early stages captured the public approval has been presented and developed by a group of leading personalities who resisted the temptation of moving too far in advance of the time.

Once the progressive idea upon which the common policy is based, has played itself out, new forces based upon a younger and newer point of view find impulse and expression in an alternative party. When the main core of the original group of men whose team play has carried the party through a lease of life weakens through age and death, the process of disintegration becomes rapid. In Canada, the injection of new leadership and the sprinkling of new blood into a party after a long term of power, has never arrested the process of deterioration. It seems that the natural scheme that has fitted the progress of national life, is for political parties successively to lie fallow.

The ascendancy then falls into the hands of the former opposition, which in turn follows a similar pattern. This natural trend has given in a broad way a flexibility to the progress of national life, so that the gradual and steady change that constantly plays upon the outlook of men's minds is neither thwarted nor frustrated.

This pattern consists of more than a mere party game of the "ins" and the "outs." The new creative impulse that occurs from time to time to give new direction and new power springs from the progressive conception. In reviewing the past, it may appear at first sight, as if neither of the traditional parties of Canada differed widely in principles. Yet in the atmosphere of the moments when

power changed hands, the differences appeared clearly drawn to contemporary minds. If the differences in fundamental principle were in reality slight, the differences in personalities and in manner of approach were relatively great. A progressive idea does not necessarily differ in its fundamental principles from its outworn predecessor. The idea in politics becomes a mixture of minds and men. It becomes identified with the personalities of its advocates. Its newness, its progressiveness and its general appeal, draw their breath of life from the new men who step forth to personify it. If a political idea takes active shape radically different in its fundamentals from tradition or radically in advance of the general social temper, there ensues a real danger of an irreconcilable cleavage in society. The maximum measure of freedom for the body politic consists of the minimum of irreconcilability. Violent changes are always fraught with a direct menace to a free society. It is therefore essential for any political party in Canada to adjust its ideas on the broadest possible basis, fully in step with changing conditions, but directed to preserve the maximum measure of freedom.

The future of a Conservative party in Canada depends upon whether it will represent a new progressive idea that will capture the imagination of public opinion in its broadest sense. It will equally depend upon whether there emerges a group of co-ordinating individuals who can personify this idea with real conviction, and hold out a promise of administrative ability when called upon to assume power.

Before considering this problem, it may be useful to survey briefly some of the political movements of the past in the light of these reflections.

II

"I am satisfied," wrote Lord Sydenham in 1840, "that the mass of the people are sound—moderate in their demands, and attached to British institutions—but they have been oppressed by a miserable little oligarchy on the one hand and excited by a few factious demogogues on the other. I can make a middle reforming party, I feel sure, which will put down both." Spurning the sterile weight of reaction and adopting the progressive idea that was in tune with the social and political temper of the time, Sir John Macdonald built the Liberal-Conservative party.

This party maintained its ascendancy in the political life of the

Dominion for a span of twenty-nine years, with the exception of the interlude from 1872 to 1878. This ascendancy was marked by the labours of a group of individuals who were agreed upon a common general conception of policy. They displayed a relatively high degree of administrative ability in putting their policies into effect. They were ready to give a positive lead to public opinion; at the same time they were careful to avoid stretching too far beyond the contemporary atmosphere. Sir George Cartier consolidated a sure following in Quebec, which after his death in 1873 was never entirely lost. Sir Charles Tupper and Sir Leonard Tilley contributed, besides the political adherence of the Maritime Provinces, invaluable political sagacity and ability in the conduct of government affairs. Under the masterly directing hand of Macdonald, the Liberal-Conservative party established a broad basis of popular support for the general principles for which it stood—the imperial tie, and Confederation; and also for its more particular reform—the National Policy with its special project, the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Upon the death and aging of the group of men who had given this party its momentum and life, there followed an unbroken fifteen years of Liberal rule under Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The new phase of national outlook that began at the close of the nineteenth century demanded new men and new measures compatible with a new progressive idea. Liberalism had become strongly entrenched in Ontario. George Brown had been its ardent propagandist. Oliver Mowat had translated the Liberal doctrine into an unbroken prolonged period of provincial government. Laurier with a consummate persuasiveness pleaded the cause of political liberalism in Quebec.

In 1887 he accused ultramontane reactionaries in Quebec "of laboriously and by misfortune, and too efficaciously working to degrade religion to the simple proportions of a political party." Prior to the general election of 1887, he said:

> I am of French origin and have the pride of my race; in politics I am an English Liberal. The principles which I profess are the outgrowth of study and reflection, and did not come to me from the land of my ancestors. They came to me from England, from the great mother of modern liberty. I belong to the school of those men who fill the pages of British history, who always faced the great, to get the right. I belong to the school of Hampden and Pym, of Russell and Somers and of Burke, and of one who did not hesitate, we read, on one occasion, to say to the Ministers of the Crown that they had not behaved as

they should have towards the colonies which were then in rebellion and to say that they had provoked that rebellion, just as Ministers since have provoked a rebellion.

The new provinces of the West were beginning to inject into Confederation a new spirit which had distinctly Liberal tendencies. The Liberal government of Laurier inherited the Confederation that had been established under the Liberal-Conservative party, the imperial tie that had been strengthened by that party, and the West that had been laid open for Canada by that party. Laurier became the phenomenon of the Empire and Confederation. With the assistance of his chief lieutenants, Mr Fielding and Sir Clifford Sifton, he succeeded in maintaining an efficient government.

It is difficult to form definite conclusions as to the full meaning of the Conservative victory of 1911. The Halifax platform enunciated by Robert Bordon in 1907 had struck no progressive note. Further, the outbreak of the first World War diverted the course of political development from its natural direction. This Conservative success may have been the result of the complex sentiments of the moment rather than the mark of a new and more permanent phase of popular opinion. It may have been an interval in the course of the progressive idea that lay behind the liberalism of Laurier. It is certain that the breadth of its national basis was limited by a distinct weakness in the nature of Quebec support. The success of the Conservative party at the polls was made possible by the adherence of the narrowly nationalist movements in Quebec.

Thus the Borden government rested upon a foundation that was precarious for the building of a structure for long and continuous power.

The government of Mackenzie King inherited the aftermath of the war combined with the aftermath of Laurier liberalism. This government undoubtedly represented a new phase in national outlook. Progressive ideas are relative to their times. The progressive idea behind the liberalism of King bore the stamp of public sentiment during the long hiatus between two world wars. It was marked by constitutional changes, but a negative policy. The spirit of the time sought a "return to normalcy." Public opinion, was not pitched to a positive course of action. The five years interval of the Bennett government was transient. R. B. Bennett acted, unlike Macdonald, Laurier and King, in detachment from the movement of public opinion and without a sure and lasting

consolidated support in Quebec. The secret of the Liberal predominance for the last twenty years lies in the co-ordination of a group of individuals agreed upon a general popular course which met with sufficient favour throughout the various parts of Confederation. The strength of this party owed its continuity to a large extent to the power of Ernest Lapointe in Quebec. No party has retained any prolonged ascendancy in the political life of the Dominion without an even break in the different provinces. No party can hope to maintain itself for any time against a solid block in one of the major provinces.

Democracy in Confederation becomes totally unworkable under a government opposed by a united mass of opinion concentrated in any one of its greater areas. This would be so whether that opposition were centred in the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario or the West. On the other hand, any government that seeks to hold sway through the consolidated support of one province against the majority opinion in the rest of the country, is not only doomed to eventual defeat, but is increasing the possibility of an irreconcilable cleavage in Canadian society. Therein lies a menace to Confederation of supreme magnitude.

III

The Conservative party at the present time stands in a situation different from that of any Canadian party in the past. It is true that it provides an alternative to a party that has had a long term of office and is now weighed down with the strain of war. Setting aside questions arising from the manner of conducting the war and the dissatisfaction apparent in various sections of public opinion as to war policies pursued and methods adopted, it is inevitable that in the ordinary course a government which affects so closely the private lives of individuals will gather its due momentum of unpopularity. It is unlikely that any sudden breath of new life can at this stage kindle a new spirit in the Liberal party that will carry it into the new wave of predominating public sentiment. The time is ripe again for new men and new measures.

Yet the appreciable growth of the C.C.F. party throws a new element into the prospect. The progressive farmer movement following the first World War was sporadic and insubstantial. The C.C.F. party has emerged with a much broader appeal, and a

developing political organization. Considerations of future party alignments cannot fail to reckon on the possibility of this party as an alternative government. The Conservative party, therefore, cannot passively assume that the natural processes of decay in the Liberal government will as a matter of course result in the shifting of power into Conservative hands. It may still be true to some extent that governments defeat themselves, and people vote consciously against a government rather than consciously for a policy. Yet in voting against the government at the next general election, the public will have two ways of doing so. In casting a negative vote they will have to choose between two positive alternatives.

The appeal of the C.C.F. party lies in its fundamentally socialist direction. Its adherents believe that the ultimate solution of economic injustices is the complete control by the state of the instruments of production. They do not advocate that this should be done at one stroke. They propose to accomplish it by successive steps. Yet there seems to be little doubt that some form of total social planning is, in their minds, a desirable end. To people who hold salaried positions in schools and under governments and even in some large business enterprises, the prospect of socialism presents no apparent violent uprooting of their way of life. To them the doctrine holds some fascination. It is a theory to toy with. It provides a mental occupation that is interesting. To some branches of the labour movement socialism offers the hope of defeating what is regarded as exploitation. To those who suffered most from the demoralizing influence of the great depression, any new system seems better than the possibility of a return to the hopelessness of those days. The farmer knows that there is little likelihood of expropriation of his land, and is encouraged to look forward to some system of parity prices.

Yet there are large and influential classes of society who fear that a system of total planning will paralyse industrial activity, and as a result a general decline rather than a rise in general living standards will ensue. There is the widespread fear that the total planning towards which this party would move by stages, would be beyond the capacities of the men whom this party would place in power.

The oppressive system of controls established under the War Measures Act has given the public a bitter taste of what is conceived as an inevitable adjunct of socialism. If controls that

prescribe what people must not do meet with growing unpopularity, it takes little foresight to imagine the greater burden of a system of controls that tells people what they must do and how to do it. The advent of socialism will therefore lead to a deeply rooted and widely spread resistance on the part of a large and strong and intelligent section of the body politic. It will mean a cleavage in society that will be irreconcilable. Whether or not the viewpoint of the opponents of socialism is wrong, the political problem is one arising from the fact that this profound conviction exists, not only in the minds of a few but in the minds of relatively many.

If the C.C.F. party were the only alternative party, a negative vote against the government would mean a vote for something of which a vast number of electors would have no clear conception. Yet if this party should be returned to power with a large support of such a negative vote, it would nevertheless be forced to take radical steps in the direction of its avowed philosophy. To establish sufficient strength to implement its promises drastic measures could not be wholly avoided.

If, however, such a government were to prove indecisive, if it failed to take the bold measures that its most ardent followers demand, the consequent loss of cohesion in the administration and the general spread of uncertainty in the country would grow into fatal weakness. The natural result of divided counsels of a radically inclined government is a violent reaction. Under such circumstances, the downfall of such a government generally results in a much more reactionary administration than has been previously experienced.

On the other hand, if a radical government has the strength and united determination to fulfil the spirit of its most advanced promises, it must take drastic steps to consolidate its position beyond the possibility of defeat. Its ventures to be successful must be placed upon a basis of permanence. An advanced state of socialism cannot continue in face of a strong opposition whose constant objective is to destroy the socialist system. Such a fundamental cleavage in ideology between government and opposition renders a socialist society insecure and perhaps unworkable. The inevitable tendency is thus towards the gradual destruction of all opposition. Although the socialist ideal may in its original manifestation rest upon a democratic basis, and though a socialist government may gain power by democratic methods, a clear issue

will eventually arise as to whether socialism or democracy is of the first importance. If it appears necessary to sacrifice the one for the other, a government strongly imbued with socialist doctrine will inevitably place the strong accent on socialism. In a society that is fundamentally divided by points of view that are irreconcilable, a socialist government will of necessity drift into a dictatorship of the socialist party. To maintain the conditions that it believes to be of paramount importance, it must destroy effective constitutional opposition and purge all opposing elements in the civil services and the state.

Under these conditions and faced with these real possibilities, an opposition of more conservative opinion must set its course to stand for a progressive idea that neither lags behind nor advances beyond the social temper of the time. Its policy must be enunciated upon broad positive principles that will answer the demands of those who have just complaint against conditions that prevailed prior to the war. At the same time it must preserve to the utmost the creative and dynamic elements of a society of free action. A policy of this scope will not satisfy the die-hard reactionaries of the right, nor will it wholly please the extreme doctrinaires of the left. It should, however, upon certain conditions, find a sure solid breadth of support from the vast mass of moderate opinion. The irreconcilables will thus be separated in two groups at each end of the scale, the one having nothing in common with the other. Society, instead of facing the grave danger of being split in half, will rest firmly upon a broad basis of reconcilable middle opinion, with the irreconcilables distributed in fragments at the fringes. A state of the most possible freedom at any time exists only where irreconcilability is reduced to a minimum.

The success of such a Conservative progressive policy will depend upon two conditions. Both of these conditions relate to the question of personnel. The first condition is that the reactionary elements in the party must be forced to give way to the ascendancy of younger men who from their belief in a progressive policy and their disassociation from vested interests can persuade the public of their unreserved sincerity. That a group of men exist in the party of this calibre is becoming abundantly clear. The meeting of Conservative laymen held at Port Hope in September, 1942 proved that the Conservative party contains a body of men and women who had the initiative and imagination to come from all

parts of the Dominion to formulate their views as to what the party should stand for under the conditions of the present and the future. This was a sign of a new and distinctive life in a party that was rapidly losing its hold upon the public imagination. Leadership of the party must, to be effective, reflect the general spirit of the Port Hope proposals.

The second condition is that this party produce sufficient men available for high rank in government, of first-rate administrative ability. For a progressive policy under modern conditions requires more than creative imagination and courageous decisions. It will require, when in power, men who can with efficiency and political sagacity carry into full and sustained effect the sort of projects that a progressive policy demands. This is the sort of quality that a revived Conservative party should be in the best position to offer. Once established on a broad basis that is not restricted by limitations of class or interest, it should readily attract from the professions, business, labour, and the farm, the best available men to accomplish what future conditions will make it necessary to do.

It is upon this basis that a Progressive Conservative party may hope to emerge as a vital influence in the life of Canada. So established it may rise to consolidate and strengthen the opinion that exists in every province in varying degree, that in all national issues the good of Canada must be placed above sectional, local and class interests, and above doctrinaire aspirations. The lesser freedoms must subject themselves to restriction and discipline to realize the conception of a greater freedom. A Progressive Conservative party will stand for work, security and freedom. This will entail a new vision outward and a new balancing of forces within.

BEATRICE AND THE POETRY OF DANTE[1]

ULRICH LEO

IN sketching the portrait of Virgil I have tried to show the earthly reality, the humanity, naturally imperfect, that belongs to him and confers upon him his corresponding poetical perfection. He germinates from the stratum of everyday experience, the kind that anyone can have with his contemporaries, and if the person enjoying such experience is a great poet the result is a poetical figure like that of Dante's Virgil. Exactly the opposite happens in the case of Beatrice. She had to be from the beginning something supernatural, something perfect, not earthly but celestial. She was not to resemble the young woman of Florence whose name she bore: she was to be as different from the latter as an angel is different from a woman. We shall have to see whether the poet succeeded as well in creating a woman on the plane of the other world as he did in creating a man grown in the soil of earthly experience.

Before reviewing the features of the Beatrice of the *Commedia* let us remember her poetical history, which begins not on the summit of the Holy Mount, where she appears in a celestial apotheosis before taking flight with her poet-friend for the ten heavens, but begins for us in Dante's *Vita Nuova*, written probably in 1292, a poem in prose mingled with sonnets and *canzoni*, mysterious, subtle, melancholy, human, indescribably poetic. The young poet tells us the story of his discreet, spiritual and yet passionate love for a Florentine girl. It began in her ninth year, and grew until her untimely death when she was a young matron, and then continued in his memory of her, with spells of unfaithfulness and repentance, and reappearances of her to him in visions. There is no doubt in my mind that the poet is relating real events, that Beatrice was a real woman, and that she has no allegorical significance in this youthful work, even though she is highly idealized. Now, at the end of the book the poet mentions a "marvellous vision" connected with the dead Beatrice, without describing it, and says that, with the help of God, he will sometime speak again

[1]This is the second part of Dr. Leo's study: his treatment of Virgil and the Poetry of Dante, appeared in the October number of the QUARTERLY. (EDITOR'S NOTE.)

of her, and that he hopes "to say of her that which has never been said of any woman." Nothing could be more natural than to see in these passionate veiled words a reference to the future *Divine Comedy*, and yet the most competent modern critics are agreed in refusing to see it. I shall not undertake to expound their reasons for such a surprising attitude,[2] but in any case those lines are—if one consider them poetically, not historically—a sign of what Beatrice was to be in the poem, as against the Beatrice of the *Vita Nuova*. She was to be a sublimation of the youthful Beatrice, which means, as far as the poetical composition is concerned, that she enters upon the stage of the *Commedia* not free to develop as a new *dramatis persona*, as is Virgil, who has not appeared before in any other work of Dante, but makes her appearance in Paradise conditioned by her former earthly self of the *Vita Nuova*. The youthful Beatrice is almost always invisibly present inhibiting any ingenuous conduct on the part of the celestial Beatrice, who above all else has to preserve her own distinction from the other: she has to appear as transfigured, in allegorical form, sublimated, marked with her inevitable poetical fate. If we wish to understand the Beatrice of the *Commedia* we must see her always with the more or less shadowy Beatrice of the *Vita Nuova* in the background and nearly always unlike that other.

Let us compare the two when they are offended and reserved. In the *Vita Nuova*[3] Dante tells us how once, because of evil rumours about her admirer, the youthful Beatrice did not speak to him when she met him in the street. He says it with few words: "And for this reason . . . this most noble lady, who was the destroyer of all vice and queen of virtue, in passing by a certain place, denied me her sweet greeting, in which resided all my beatitude." That is all, and no one will deny that this manner of showing the

[2]But see, for example, N. Zingarelli, *Dante* (Milano, 1931), I, 295 ff.; and J. E. Shaw, *Essays on the V. N.*, 178 ff. At least one of those reasons is vulnerable, i.e. the belief that the *D. C.* was all composed much later than the *V. N.* See G. Ferretto, *I due tempi della composizione della D. C.*; K. McKenzie, "Tal che testè piaggia" (*Italica*, XVIII, no. 3); and my "Dante in Germany" (*ibid.*, 101-2), which confirm the probability that the first cantos of the *Inferno* may have been composed before the rest of the *Commedia*, and perhaps soon after the *V. N.* and the corresponding probability that the young poet may have had in his mind the whole of the gigantic plan potentially, like a dream or a "vision" such as is mentioned in the last lines of the *V. N.*

[3]*V. N.*, x.

silent, offended young lady, passing without greeting the man who is devouring her with his eyes, admirably paints the scene as it no doubt really occurred, and suggests with its reticence all the tender and tormenting emotion of the event. It was in the same laconic manner that he had told how she greeted him the first time.[4]

Now let us look at the same Beatrice in her transfigured state in the Terrestrial Paradise, facing her old admirer and friend immediately after his beloved master has left him in awful loneliness. Beatrice is standing upright upon the mystic chariot on the other side of the river, like an admiral on his galley inspecting the crews of the other ships.[5] What a strange comparison with which to present a woman who has just descended in a cloud of flowers, his beloved woman, his lady! By calling her "admiral" to indicate her severe dignity, he strips her for the moment of all feminine charm, so that she becomes not so much monumental as actually repellent. And like a hard-boiled sergeant she berates him in many *terzine* for his failings and his sins, especially his faithlessness to her. Even the angels who are with her take pity on the poor rebuked, humiliated man, but that does not mitigate the harsh attitude of the transfigured lady, the same one who in her earthly state had expressed the same feeling of hurt dignity in such a discreet and feminine manner. The poet is trying now to depict his own humiliation and the exaltation of his beloved in the transcendental region of the Beyond, and so he presents to us not the Florentine lad and his girlish love but the human sinner in the presence of divine eternity and the beatified, immaterial, angelic being who is no longer a woman. It is just this sublime attempt to present something that is beyond all earthly erotic experience, a pair of transcendental lovers, that makes the task of the poet so terribly difficult in introducing his transfigured Beatrice.

The inexorable aesthetic necessity he felt of sublimating and moralizing Beatrice, in this first longed-for meeting in Paradise, damaged the scene, the idea and subject of which might have made it one of the most impressive in literature, if only something of its moral and metaphysical content could have been sacrificed. Dante, the great poet, great moralist, and profoundly religious man, did not succeed this time in preserving the balance between the

[4] *Ibid.*, iii (ii).
[5] *Purg.*, xxx, 58-60.

poetical and unpoetical constituents. The offended Beatrice of the *Vita Nuova* is above all else a charming girl lyrically glorified; the offended Beatrice of the *Purgatorio* is a saint, a learned person, a preceptress, but not a woman. She who in Florence passed by silently, withholding the hoped-for greeting, now speaks and preaches. She will leave nothing unsaid because the moral system of the poem requires that all the morality and metaphysics be explained; but as far as the effect is concerned, perhaps the silence of the girl in the street of Florence would have been even here more eloquent than the sermon of the transfigured guide delivered from the mystic chariot.

Very soon afterward the celestial Beatrice ceases to be angry and becomes, just as Virgil had been, the friend, teacher and guide of Dante. But she goes on talking, explaining things, expounding the whole of scholastic theology, at the different stages of the supernatural journey. This continuous explanation of the veiled, abstract meaning of the heavenly country which is unfolding itself before the astonished and enchanted eyes of the poet is her mission, almost the chief reason for her presence beside him. She is continuing the explanations of Virgil and Statius in Hell and Purgatory, but a woman teacher and lecturer is more in danger than a man of losing her poetic nature and seeming tiresome. I do not mean to say that Dante's Beatrice, who is a sublime poetical creation, is unattractive or tiresome: I mean to point out the enormous difficulty of the poetical work that sprang inevitably from the metaphysical plan of our religious poet.

For it is not only a question of difference of sex between the teacher Virgil and the teacher Beatrice: there is that internal necessity for Beatrice to be sublime, as representing heaven and being different from her former, earthly self. Whereas the most notable characteristic of Dante's Virgil is his lack of presumption, his natural and touching modesty, she is oracular. Virgil, as we have seen, placed himself more and more on the same level with his disciple, disregarding his authority as guide; he shared his astonishment at what they saw in Purgatory, and willingly made way for Statius. Just for that reason his poetical figure achieved more and more that purely human character of earthly and imperfect man and friend. Beatrice, on the contrary, is never for a moment to be found on the same level with Dante: she soars above him on a plane to which he cannot aspire. She does not represent

the imperfection of Limbo, which is like that of Earth, nor the worldly imperfection of a young Florentine lady courted by a young gentleman: she represents divine perfection.

In my view, the presumptuousness of Dante's Beatrice—that ever perceptible superiority to her pupil and friend—and her lack of modesty and humanity, are only inadequate poetical means by which the poet was attempting to convey the inexpressible. The somewhat pedantic, dogmatic Beatrice seems to me the result of an antiquated deficiency of drawing in the representation of the sacred and the metaphysical embodied in human form, a deficiency comparable to the adorable heaviness that sometimes in the paintings of Cimabue or Giotto results from the attempt to convey divine or holy sublimity. Beatrice at times represents the mediaeval character of Dante's poetry in its sense of inadequacy, just as Virgil represents the Renaissance character of his poetry, his advance to the plane of a humanized poetic art.[6]

Never would Virgil have reproached Dante for the ingenuousness of his questions, even though he too, as we know, spoke to him sternly enough at times. But Beatrice, before answering a question of his, now and then smiles a little, sighs pityingly, and shows that she feels herself to be altogether above him.

> My question with a pitying sigh she met,
> then eyed me with a mother's anxious care
> for child whose brain delirious dreams beset, ...[7]

Never would Virgil have called his own opinions "infallible," as Beatrice does,[8] and although she is right because she represents God, this very fact damages her poetically. When she explains the power and effect of her beauty and her smile,[9] that is only tolerable by understanding it as a poetically inadequate means of making the supernatural sensible. She has the form of a woman, but even for the poet himself she is not a woman but a symbol of divine beauty: a real woman leaves the praise of her beauty to her admirers. The conflict between the metaphysical and the aesthetic produces a jarring effect in these passages.[10]

[6]By thus explaining Dante's Beatrice as a figure that failed to attain its perfect poetic form I may seem to be agreeing with those who consider the whole *Paradiso* a poetic failure: as will be seen later, I mean nothing of the kind.

[7]*Par.*, trans. Bickersteth, i, 100-2.

[8]*Ibid.*, vii, 19.

[9]*Ibid.*, xxi, 4-12.

[10]See *ibid.*, ii, 52 ff.; iv, 40 ff.; xxix, 82 ff. Most of this latter splendid canto is spoiled by the haughty sermonizing which interrupts the divine vision.

When Beatrice is not talking she smiles more and more radiantly, joyfully, effectively, as she approaches the Divinity that glorifies her, and the poet feels more and more the insufficiency of his human eyes, incapable of suffering the superhuman glory of her smile, until divine grace comes to his aid and transforms his natural gaze into miraculous vision.[11] This smile of Beatrice is one of the most sublime inventions in the poem: it is on the one hand the expression of the Holy Spirit, and on the other of her affection for her beloved pupil, whom she is drawing upward through the heavens, cleansing him finally of all earthly imperfection. And yet, aesthetically, this unique expression of supernatural joy and benignity in the form of a smile, also has something almost intolerably simple about it: it reminds one of the "archaic smile" of the oldest Greek sculpture. However that may be, we see in this smile the central significance of Dante's celestial Beatrice, just as much a part of her as it is of the divine light from which it emanates. This steady smile which nevertheless becomes ever more impressively sublime, more inexpressibly beautiful, displays before us the superhuman effort of the poet to concentrate symbolically the whole superterrestrial world in the face of an adored and now deified woman, the poetic effort that gave birth to this poetic figure, perhaps the quaintest that poetic and metaphysical effort combined have ever produced.

Just as the departure of Virgil showed us in one last moment his whole human and poetical significance, so the disappearance of Beatrice in the Celestial Rose is characteristically different. For neither does Beatrice remain with Dante until the end. Once more a substitute appears; once more Dante who has become dependent on his feminine guide as he had before on his masculine leader, sees himself alone, that is, in the presence of a stranger, the resplendent soul of St Bernard—comparable to Statius, the substitute for Virgil—who is to lead him into the presence of God, after addressing an ecstatic prayer to the Virgin Mary. Why, at the end of the poem, is so centrally important a person replaced by another? My own impression is that the disappearance of Beatrice is determined by the sure instinct of the poet, who no doubt felt that his Beatrice had played her part and that her absence would add to the glory of the sublime ending of the poem more than her

[11]See my article, "Sehen und Schauen bei Dante" (*Deutsches Dante Jahrbuch*, XI, 1929).

presence could. It is a fact that the last three cantos of the *Paradiso* flow as if liberated, with a complete abandonment to vision and wonder free from the constant interruptions of explanations and exhortations.

The departure of Beatrice corresponds to that of Virgil, but just as the two persons are strikingly different, even in detail, so the correspondence of their departures is a correspondence of contrasts. Virgil came to the "dark wild wood" without a word: he appeared like a ghost and vanished like one. This quiet manner of coming and going is, as has been said, characteristic of him: it is a rather spectacular way of representing his simple, modest nature. Beatrice presents herself ostentatiously in a magnificent celestial and ecclesiastical *décor*, clothed in red and green, surrounded by flowers and angels, awaited by a great procession of allegorical figures in the enchanting spring-like garden of the Terrestrial Paradise; and this pompous arrival is also characteristic of her, who throughout the celestial journey never rids herself of a certain presumptuousness, even in her most gentle and charming moments, and these are not lacking. So it was natural that her exit should be unlike that of Virgil: her manner of going had to be more noticeable, more clearly defined. We may add, however, that the poet succeeds all the same in making of the departure of Beatrice in the Rose of heaven the most simply human and poetically touching moment of her life in the poem.

Dante turns to Beatrice, as he had before to Virgil, to ask her to explain something:

> But other than I purposed came reply:
> I saw instead of Beatrice an old man, . . .[12]

The old man explains kindly that while Dante was gazing with all his soul at the Celestial Rose, Beatrice had left him and had directed himself, St Bernard, to take her place. He points out her seat in the Rose, the assemblage of the Blessed in the presence of God, and—here is the difference from the total disappearance of Virgil—Dante sees her far away, very far from himself, and addresses to her a touching, grateful prayer, less suitable to an adored and beloved lady than to a saintly mother. Up to this point the contrast with the departure of Virgil, the human friend, the "dolcissimo padre," is complete: then come three unforgettable lines:

[12] *Par.*, xxxi, 58-9.

> Thus I, and from that seeming far-off height
> she looked on me and smiled, then turning bent
> her gaze upon the eternal source of light.[13]

That glance—just like that of his love of former times—given to her friend and poet on the threshold of the highest heaven, without a word, and then that turning to God without looking back, are poetic in the most intimate sense. They make one forget all the instruction and admonition scattered through thirty cantos, and show us at the last moment a Beatrice transfigured indeed, but nevertheless a woman, whose silent smile, from where she sits on high, recalls, like the memory of something long forgotten, that greeting of the young lady in the street of Florence, the Beatrice of long ago. At last, after all, the metaphysician and the moralist have yielded to the poet.

III. Conclusion

We might here bring to an end our study of Virgil and Beatrice, and of the parts they play in the poem. We have become acquainted with the very human Virgil and his human failings and imperfections, still a man although no longer of this world, and for this very reason perfect in his poetic effectiveness. We have become acquainted with Beatrice, a transfigured opposite of her earthly self, without faults or weaknesses, claiming the perfection of a beatified soul, and for this very reason imperfect in her poetic effectiveness.

Hitherto, however, I have been describing our impression as modern readers, that is, readers—disregarding special exceptions—who know only the earthly reality of the human world. It is obvious that, from this point of view, Virgil, in his worldliness, without mysticism or supernatural qualities, but very human in mind and spirit, must impress us more easily and perfectly as a poetic figure. So does the earthly Beatrice of the *Vita Nuova*, whereas the celestial Beatrice who, after her first step in the garden of Paradise, has passed beyond all human limitations, must make a strange and even painful impression on the reader who is tied to earthly reality, and she will produce a direct poetic effect, in spite of her unusual circumstances, only now and then, thanks to the extraordinary power of Dante's genius.

[13] *Par.*, xxxi, 90-3.

All that changes as soon as the modern reader succeeds in placing himself in the spiritual attitude of Dante the Catholic and mediaeval poet, whose perspective of reality and truth extended beyond earthly limits to the horizon of the world beyond, or rather, to whose mind God and His three Kingdoms were more truly real and more immediately and substantially present than the realm of Earth and of living men. For he had the faculty, at least poetically speaking, of seeing the invisible, that is, he had spiritual and aesthetic eyes endowed with superhuman powers, able to apprehend divine things expressed in aesthetic form, as he had seen them by the grace of his God.

For him, as for his scholastic masters, the other-world state of man was more real than his state in this world; the celestial reality of a beatified soul, and the infernal reality of a condemned soul, were their true reality, and the earthly state was only the imperfect preparation for the others.[14] And so the celestial Beatrice was only the perfection and the true reality of the earthly Beatrice, who seems to us moderns the more real. The "mirabile visione" at the end of the *Vita Nuova* was nothing but the vision of a Beatrice in her other-world reality, the evidence and fulfilment of the imperfect earthly reality of that story. All the symbolical and pedagogical attributes of Beatrice, like her ever more radiant, happy, indescribable smile, are nothing but expressions and consequences of the amplified, exalted, celestially real reality, the revelation of the perfect and real celestial Beatrice, who on Earth, according to the Catholic faith and the transcendental ontology of her poet, could be only imperfect, and not entirely real. To see and express poetically that reality, which was truer for him than the earthly reality, our poet needed and acquired eyes capable of bearing the supernatural smile of his former love, and the poetical expression of all that he thus saw naturally produced a result different from what we usually call poetry.

If, in the light of these considerations, we were to review all the details in the poetic figure of Beatrice that displeased us, or at least seemed odd to us, perhaps they would seem more natural and even more poetic than the more human poetry of Virgil and the earlier Beatrice, but let us not do it. Let us be content with

[14]See Erich Auerbach, *Dante als Dichter der irdischen Welt* (Berlin, Leipzig, 1929), and his brochure *Figura* (Florence, 1939), as well as my own articles mentioned in note 1.

having seen that there is a way of understanding poetically even that part of Dante's poetry that is apparently unpoetic: by taking the only point of view that makes it possible to see with the eyes of the poet himself, that is, understanding the horizon of his poetic creation and everything within it as the natural aesthetic result of his philosophical and religious faith in the substantial truth of the divine realities of the Christian supernatural world. Let us take this way of perceiving, even in that part the aesthetic purity of which we cannot as yet appreciate or value as legitimate poetry, the enormous scope, the overwhelming grandeur of the attempt to give shape to things which cannot possibly be expressed in earthly terms; let us yield ourselves to the persuasive envelopment of the metaphysically real, and we shall be able to digest the aesthetically hard. Once it is understood, the most sublime element of Dante's poetry, and the most natural too, will be found to reside in his mediaeval and Catholic quality. Even when he commits errors of artistry, they will be comprehensible and even indispensable to him who has once glimpsed the vision of universal reality upon which the artist was gazing.

BOOKS ABOUT INDIA*

G. S. Brett

THE limits of this review of books about India were defined by the material which was made available. The problem of selection, which would have been serious, was thus eliminated. There remained only the question of the plan which should be followed in order to produce the best results with the greatest economy of space and time. After much consideration and perplexity it seemed best to concentrate attention on three works which had special claims both on account of their size and because they represented distinct types of approach to the subject which we comprehensively denote by the word India. Accordingly, the survey begins with the work of Mr Shridharani, continues with the volumes by W. R. Smith and the co-operating authors of *Modern India and the West*, and concludes by directing attention to a group of publications which could only be treated in a more summary manner. If the order of treatment or proportion of emphasis is open to criticism, these remarks may serve to explain and justify the procedure adopted.

The book by Mr Shridharani has many merits. It has an introduction by a novelist (Louis Bromfield) and this is a good index of its character. It is primarily an autobiography and by describing scenes from his life in India the author succeeds in giving an intimate and instructive view of India from inside. The excellence of the writing deserves mention. The words flow easily with remarkable aptness: apparently Indian writers, when they succeed, have that acute sense for words which is the result of using a foreign language. The necessity of selecting the right phrase with an effort

**My India, My America*, by Krishnalal Shridharani. New York, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941. *Nationalism and Reform in India*, by William Roy Smith. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938. *Modern India and the West: A Study of the Interactions of their Civilizations*. Oxford University Press, 1941. *The Unity of India*, by Jawaharlal Nehru. London, Lindsay Drummond, 1942. *Glimpses of World History*, by Jawaharlal Nehru. New York, John Day Co, 1942. *India To-day: The Background of the Indian Nationalist Movement*. Toronto, Ryerson Press, 1941. *The Indian States and Indian Federation*, by Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency. Cambridge University Press, 1942. *The Cripps Mission*, by R. Coutland. Oxford University Press, 1942. *What Does Gandhi Want?* by T. A. Raman. Oxford University Press, 1942.

of attention calls forth a degree of careful expression not often exercised by writers of such books as this. Mr Shridharani does not conceal his likes and dislikes, but his partiality is not excessive. He loses no opportunity to indicate the defects of British rule and in general create the impression that India is the victim of a government which is far from benevolent. His attitude toward America suggests that he was impressed chiefly by the extent to which Americans are ignorant of Indian life and thought: by his account of several ludicrous incidents and constant misunderstandings he confirms the common opinion that for many Americans India is primarily a land of mystery and magic. To counteract this limitation Shridharani gives an illuminating account of many aspects of Indian life: he achieves his best results in the two chapters on "Mother India," old and modern, which offer a spirited reply to the inferences that have been drawn from Katharine Mayo's *Mother India*. The intellectual life of India is treated less adequately and with too much effort to underline possible anticipations of modern science. The contributions to science made by the Hindus in early times are important and deserve to be better known, but nothing is gained by such ambiguous statements as that "the Hindu physicists had propounded the atomic theory of matter and understood conservation of energy" before the end of the sixteenth century. Shridharani explains the reasons why "the Hindu mind lost its scientific force" in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but when he comes to the "period of Enlightenment in India in the middle of the nineteenth century" he is characteristically evasive. Because the British would "brook no interference" India attained peace and security: as a result there appeared such men as Sir C. V. Raman, Nobel Prize winner in physics, and "laboratories all over India are to-day full of promising young scientists." If Shridharani had an opportunity at this point to give any credit for these results to British encouragement and direction, he is careful to overlook it.

In his "Reflections on Non-Violence" Shridharani discusses at considerable length this type of political strategy. He links it with pacifism in general and elaborates a philosophy of resistance by non-co-operation which contains many acute observations on the principles involved. The practical value of Gandhi's outlook is revealed by the answer which the Mahatma gave when asked what in case of invasion should be done by "a free country pledged to

non-violence." The answer was that "the representatives of the free Indian State would let the invader in without opposition: but they would tell the invader and all his forces at the frontier that the Indian people would refuse to cooperate in any work." In the light of three years of pogroms and massacres the alternative offered to the enemy, either "to march in over a bloody human carpet or go back," seems likely to cause no embarrassment. Further comment is unnecessary. It is more profitable to turn over to the third part of the book which describes the life and character of each of the great leaders in India, namely Gandhi, Khan ("the frontier Gandhi"), Nehru, Tagore, and other less conspicuous persons. Among the latter we naturally look for Mr Jinnah, leader of the Moslems in so far as they are united in opposition to the Congress party: we find him portrayed without favour and without malice: he is said to be "utterly honest, scrupulously upright, a man of great personal integrity," but none the less "unkind critics" have suggested that his motives are not very pure, his vanity easily offended and his attitude dictatorial. The complexity of this description is perhaps intended to leave the reader in a state of suspended judgment: Jinnah's scheme for an independent Moslem state (Pakistan) not only threatens the unity of India but opens up the prospect of uniting part of India with Moslem countries as far west as Egypt, and this does not commend itself to a Hindu. The fourth part of Shridharani's book is political: it discusses many topics, both retrospective and prospective: great issues are outlined with skill and knowledge, and not the least of them is the future of China, which has been pushed by Japanese aggression westward until it depends for its supplies on Indian bases—a fact of great significance for the destiny of the Asiatic nations. One question can legitimately be asked: if India had been armed would it have been today a source of "inexhaustible manpower" for the United Nations? There can be no sure answer, least of all from those in India who think that they have been forced to take part in a war that was none of their business.

Books about India are now coming out with unusual frequency. They fall into two definite classes according as the dominant tendency is to affirm or deny the value for India of its connection with Britain. In a subject of this complexity it is unwise to talk of prejudices: the conflict of opinions must be accepted and the different parties must be given credit for sincerity in their convic-

tions so long as there is no obvious unfairness in their arguments. At the same time it must be admitted that there are degrees of plausibility and plenty of scope for special pleading. Among those which may most reasonably be considered impartial in attitude and judicious in the use of evidence the work of William Roy Smith, *Nationalism and Reform in India*, deserves a prominent place. As this book was published in 1938 it ends with the Constitution of 1935: its value lies in the elaborate study which it presents of the development from 1885 up to that climax. The fact that it was written by an American scholar increases the probability that it affords a basis for an objective judgment of the period. Added to this are the equipment of the writer as a student of politics and the fact that (to quote the Foreword) "this book is the result of eighteen years of study, travel and interest in the people and problems of India." This is a work of lasting importance on account of its careful scholarship and extensive research. Unlike Mr Shridharani's book, which makes its appeal for popularity by journalistic methods, this is a book for students who are prepared to give sufficient time and energy to master its rich store of information and assimilate its arguments. The first chapter summarizes the history from 1600 to 1917. This forms the background for a statement of the political development from the beginning of the Nationalist Movement in 1885, when the founders of the National Congress first met, through the successive stages of the Reforms to the conclusion of the experiment known as Dyarchy. Six chapters are given to the study of "Grievances," economic, political, social, racial and religious. Any attempt to summarize these chapters in a few words would be an impertinence. One of the most typical and convincing parts of the book is the treatment of economic grievances. The author states that the "failure to remedy economic grievances is the most vulnerable spot in their [the British] armor and it bulks large in the literature of Indian Nationalism." This is a fair statement: but the difference between our author's position and that of many Nationalists is that he is prepared to consider the questions in detail: for example, he examines the view that there is a continual "drain" of Indian revenue to England and judges the truth of this assertion in the light of economic principles and general conditions. He finds that "the real alternative to a rapid development with foreign capital was not a slow development with native capital, but a lack of any development on a large scale at all."

Again, the argument that India has enough capital to expand her own industries must be judged in relation to peculiar conditions, such as the fact that "the greater part of this capital is hoarded and the remainder follows obstinately certain traditional lines of investment." These are only samples of the way in which "grievances" should be analysed: questions of this kind can only be discussed properly by experts, and this fact makes them especially suitable for any propaganda designed to influence those who have no ability or opportunity to assess their true significance. Usually economic questions are argued on what is really a political basis: it is the presence of the "foreigner" that colours the argument, whether the economic procedure is technically defensible or not.

A subject which everyone can understand to a reasonable extent is discussed in the chapters on "Social and Racial Grievances." The poverty of India is well known: it is an obvious cause of complaint. But the reasons for it are not subject to direct control. Mr Smith points out that the British "have failed because they have been too successful." They have introduced Western ideas of medicine, surgery, and sanitation, protected people from domestic warfare and invasion, abolished suttee and other forms of religious suicide and practically done away with female infanticide. As a result population has increased enormously: between 1881 and 1931 the increase was 98 millions, and we may add that the last census of 1941 shows a further increase of nearly 50 millions. As the Commission of 1930 on Indian Agriculture declared, the standard of living could not be raised if this was the result of improved economic conditions. One consequence of this increase of numbers is the question of emigration, and that involves the treatment of Indians in the countries to which they do or might go. This has been a cause of much trouble, notably in South Africa. That Indians are British citizens and should be recognized as such in any British country is apparently a good argument. It comes into conflict with the general opposition among white peoples to any kind of Oriental settlement. In Canada the situation was complicated by the desire to maintain restrictions applicable to Chinese and Japanese: the result is that in British Columbia the Indian settlers are disfranchised. In India there is no colour bar officially recognized, but while equality is maintained politically the principle cannot be enforced socially. One of the chief sources of discontent in India arises from the fact that the British never occupied the

country to any large extent, as for example the Moslems did. That the rulers of India are a foreign people is emphasized by the fact that they come and go, serving for a time with the obvious intention of leaving and usually providing for their families elsewhere. There is an Anglo-Indian group which is permanently domiciled: but they are very few in number and, by contrast, lose prestige just because they are unable either to leave the country or become fully assimilated.

These scattered comments must suffice to indicate that Mr Smith's book deserves to be read throughout carefully. It is an adequate account of some aspects of the Indian scene; a more comprehensive survey would have to include subjects which were not a part of Mr Smith's plan. The need for a more inclusive panorama is met by a work entitled *Modern India and the West: A Study of the Interactions of their Civilizations*. This deserves to be called encyclopaedic. It comprises sixteen chapters. Of these five are written by the editor, L. S. S. O'Malley, and the remainder by different experts in the different fields, including six Indians who deal with literature in the native languages. Here we find very useful accounts of law, education, the Press, Hindu and Muslim culture, the progress of women, and the primitive tribes of India. A work of this type serves one good purpose in directing attention to subjects which are apt to be forgotten in the turmoil of political controversy: politics occupy a very subordinate place in the General Survey by the editor, which fills two hundred and fifty pages and forms a synthesis of the material provided by the previous five hundred and sixty-six pages. It will be obvious that even a summary of so many different topics cannot be given here: the importance of the book lies in its character as an epitome of information which must otherwise be sought in a great number of documents and special treatises. One distinctive feature is suggested by the title: the impact of Western thought on the East is emphasized and at the same time the significance of "the constants which persist in spite of change" is taken into account. From the West has come the impulse toward the mechanical, industrial and democratic forms of civilization: but the movement has not proceeded without awakening a sense of other ideals and other values and stimulating resistance against the destruction of the ancient Oriental culture. If East and West are at last actually meeting, one of the major problems concerns the possibility that the West

may learn from the East many valuable lessons in the art of living. Such subjects as "The Christian Ethic and India" (chap. VIII) and "Hinduism and the West" (chap. IX) introduce the reader to this aspect of the interaction, which as the Foreword points out has never been a "clash" between the old and the new but rather "a slow and peaceful penetration." The "wisdom of the East" has been coming to the West gradually but continuously ever since Duperron, Sir Charles Wilkins, Sir William Jones and H. T. Colebrooke began the study of original Sanskrit texts at the end of the eighteenth century. The influence of India on western literature is described by H. G. Rawlinson in a chapter of great interest with many amusing comments on the transformation of ideas (chap. XV). Emerson and the American Transcendentalists reflected light from the East; Sir Edwin Arnold represented a more serious and better informed presentation of the Asiatic mood, while Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* serves to illustrate the "luscious" variety of orientation which borders on parody quite unintentionally. On a different plane must be reckoned the theosophical blend of thought which exalts the pure spirituality of such works as the *Bhagavad-gita*, regarded by its admirers as comparable with the Sermon on the Mount. Indian philosophy has been presented to the West in the histories of Dasgupta and Sir S. Radhakrishnan. The appointment of Radhakrishnan as Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics in Oxford gave him a unique opportunity to influence current thought. He has used it vigorously and his writings are well known: in this book he is represented by a chapter on "Hinduism and the West" (chap. IX).

The temptation to explore other regions of thought and action under the stimulating guidance of this work must be resisted. It is time to consider some of the writings of Jawaharlal Nehru. Whatever may be the effect which these produce on the reader, they have great importance derived from their author's position as one of the most conspicuous figures in contemporary history. This political background has many advantages and some important disadvantages. The first publication to be considered is entitled *The Unity of India*. Nehru's *Autobiography* is well known: this later book carries on the story of activities which are themselves part of the history of India and it has the double significance of presenting both events that have happened and ideas that have guided recent movements. There is some affinity between Mr

Shridharani and Pandit Nehru. They both write with disarming simplicity: they illuminate events with a slightly artificial light coloured by emotions not always relevant to the argument. There is the same astonishing facility in a language which might be called foreign, though it seems to be at least part of a second nature. Much can be learned from Nehru, not only of the factual kind but also about a point of view which is sincere and militant and often difficult to tolerate. Nehru is a man of learning, a product of Harrow and Cambridge, England. This book is a collection of Nehru's "writings and Press statements on diverse topics during the five year interval between his last imprisonment and the present." It is now in its second edition and this testifies to its popularity. The book as a whole suffers from the fact that much of it consists of comments on passing events, and the comments only serve the purpose of informing the reader about Mr Nehru's opinions at the moment. The result is that the various contributions taken separately have no great significance but regarded collectively they reveal a consistent support of a few generalizations. The ultimate independence of India is the principal theme, which may be accepted as a very proper subject for emphasis. But the way in which this theme is treated is not likely to make an intelligent reader feel complete confidence in the writer's attitude. There is too much reliance on such words as "imperialism" and "vested interests," too much assurance about the indisputable authority of the Congress party, too much contempt for the other parties and failure to state candidly why the Congress party has been opposed. Nehru's "Statement at His Trial," the last item in the collection, is a useful example of some of the pervasive qualities of the book. Nehru says that "the people's elected Legislatures have been suspended and ignored" (i.e., during 1939-40) and "a greater and more widespread autocracy prevails here than anywhere else in the world . . . . If this is the prelude to the freedom that is promised us . . . then we can well imagine what the later stages will be when England emerges as a full-blooded Fascist State." To this may be added the rhetorical declaration, "there are more powerful forces at work to-day than courts of law." In view of the fact that the legislatures were "suspended" by order of the Congress Working Committee, that the prophecy about England is hardly a judicious opinion, and that Nehru was on trial for conduct which would be tolerated in no country of the world, this kind of special

pleading indicates a belief that the reader will have either defective knowledge or very little intelligence. This is not the proper place to discuss Nehru's other work, *Glimpses of World History:* it is a book by an Indian writer but not about India, except in appropriate places: it is a collection of letters written by Nehru to his daughter and both this fact and the literary artifice it involves give it a degree of immunity from criticism. The author himself says (p. 950): "You must not take what I have written in these letters as the final authority on any subject. A politician wants to have a say on every subject and he always pretends to know much more than he actually does." Without taking unfair advantage of this playful sally we may endorse it as good advice: in addition we are told by the author that he has to some degree changed his mind in the period covered by the letters, but they remain a very characteristic product. The title is correct: even in one thousand pages it is impossible to achieve more than "glimpses" at six thousand years of history. But the book is entertaining: the more strident tone of the political writings is modified and, in the mass of historical material, becomes less obtrusive. It fulfils its original purpose excellently and can also be read by many adults with advantage because it meanders in leisurely fashion through wide areas of time, and suggests innumerable topics which the reader can proceed to study more adequately elsewhere.

Among the smaller publications which deal with aspects of Indian affairs a few can be mentioned without much comment. A small but comprehensive and useful work entitled *India To-day* is published under the auspices of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs: it brings together in small compass the principal facts which should be kept in mind by anyone who proposes to express opinions on Indian affairs. The English series on Current Problems includes a monograph on *The Indian States and Indian Federation*. This is a subject on which the Indian nationalists have been accustomed to express themselves with dogmatic vigour. In their view, as expressed by Nehru, the States are with few exceptions "sinks of reaction and incompetence and unrestrained autocratic power," and are "propped up and artificially maintained by British Imperialism." The defects of the States are common knowledge and there have been occasions when the Crown has interfered to redress grievances: but in the denunciations of the Nationalists one misses any recognition of rights created by treaty

or of the extent to which the principle of non-interference has affected British policy. So long as the Nationalists think that the States are "a fifth column" maintained by the British for the purpose of defeating the progress of democracy, it is hardly likely that they will achieve any acceptable judgment. The utility of this book by Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency may be summed up by saying that it provides in brief form an antidote to the more drastic attitude of some among the Nationalist leaders.

The complexity of the situation in India is not fully realized by the average reader. Though the Congress party seems at a distance to fill the whole picture, there are other important sections and leaders. Among these must be reckoned the Moslem League which demands a separate national state, the Depressed Classes which are mainly concerned to prevent Hindu domination, and the Hindu organization (Mahasabha) which makes no concessions to the claims of Moslems. The parties are agreed on the demand for independence, but they do not agree on the structure of the proposed government. The difficulties which ended in the "failure" of negotiations are clearly described in a small book by Professor Coupland entitled *The Cripps Mission.* In direct and simple language the story of this last act in the drama is told effectively and completely. At the beginning stress is laid on the fact that the mass of the people "know nothing of high policy": such phrases as "public opinion" and "the cooperation of India" must be taken to refer to select groups organized for political action. One of the main obstacles to progress was the distrust with which all proposals were met: the real difficulties in the way of setting up a new government in the midst of war were treated as excuses for inaction. Though the reality of the crisis for India was demonstrated by the action of the Japanese, there were some who believed that this was due solely to the connection of India with the British or that in any case it made no difference whether the Japanese or the British ruled India. Though the Congress leaders assert that the strife of parties is sustained by the British to serve their own ends, there was clear evidence that it was the impending withdrawal of the British which caused the Moslems to think more seriously and aggressively about the position they would occupy in view of the numerical superiority of the Hindu population.

And finally there was Mahatma Gandhi. A very interesting and important contribution to the whole subject has been made by

T. A. Raman in his book *What Does Gandhi Want?* Mr Raman is a journalist whose name has recently become familiar to the people of Canada. He points to the simple fact that "so much is heard *about* Gandhi's views, so little *of* them," and then proceeds to supply the original material chiefly from Gandhi's own paper *Harijan*. The result is very instructive: it shows that Gandhi is in truth a sincere and saintly man, and that these qualities are not incompatible with other less desirable qualities. A misguided mystic, an unpractical visionary, an overwhelmingly powerful influence: these are the terms in which Raman sums up his estimate. As time goes on it seems to become clear that with Gandhi pacifism is the one ruling passion. He sees India set free to control the world by non-violence and spiritual force. This created an impossible position. Those who would have accepted the British proposals and undertaken to bring India fully into the war knew that Gandhi had enough influence to make their efforts futile: his retirement would seem to give support to an effort which in fact it completely undermined. It is given to very few to understand, sympathetically, a man who "feels an equal compassion for the Japanese waging the aggression and for the Chinese shedding blood in 'violent' resistance instead of choosing the 'more excellent way' of non-violence." Some of the paradoxes of this unique character are revealed in Mr Raman's attempt to answer his own question: it is a very instructive story, but not equally pleasant. Without underrating the work Gandhi has done for Indians both in India and in other lands such as Africa, it is possible to foresee the day when historians will make up the whole account and find that Gandhi's influence was sometimes a definite liability.

REVIEWS

THE UNGUARDED FRONTIER*

J. W. DAFOE

The greatest political fact of modern times, according to Bismarck, was that English was the language of North America (north of the Gulf of Mexico and the Rio Grande). Of equal significance is the circumstance that the vast geographical area to which he referred is divided between two kindred nations which, while taking full possession of the continent, have managed for a hundred and twenty-eight years to keep the peace between themselves through a series of crises which, under the conditions of the Old World, would have made a succession of wars inevitable. The series of studies issued by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, under the direction of Dr James T. Shotwell, now virtually complete with the issue of the latest volume, covers the whole field with a completeness which leaves nothing to be desired; but it is beyond the power of the general reader to master the score of volumes in which the group of historians, American and Canadian, who took part in this great enterprise, have embodied their researches and recorded their conclusions.

There has therefore been a need for a single volume telling the full story of Canadian-American relationships. This has now been supplied by Edgar W. McInnis, of the Department of History of the University of Toronto, in a volume with the happy title: *The Unguarded Frontier*. The story begins with the daring designs of the French to build an empire in the central part of the continent, thus restricting the English to the narrow strip east of the Appalachian Range, and in its closing pages it records the full acceptance by Canada and the United States of a condition of interdependence by the setting up of joint economic committees and the joint Defence Board. The author closes on the note that the King-Roosevelt policies may (and, in the opinion of the author, should) replace "the unquiet attitudes of the past with a mutual trust and co-operation, based on the realization that political separatism is not only no insuperable barrier, but may even be an asset to the free partnership

**The Unguarded Frontier: A History of American-Canadian Relations*, by EDGAR W. MCINNIS, Department of History, University of Toronto. New York, Doubleday, Doran and Co. [Toronto, McClelland and Stewart], 1942, $3.75.

of nations who are animated by common ideals and possessed of a common heritage."

The general reader, whose ideas about the relationship between Canada and the United States have been derived from purple passages of oratory dilating upon the hundred and more years of unbroken peace, will find much to surprise him in Professor McInnis's pages. Such a reader should understand that in the relationships between Canada and the United States, until very recent times, Canada's contribution upon occasions of stress and danger did not go beyond the influence it could exert upon the policies of Great Britain. There were issues and disputes during the century and more of "profound peace," which could have given rise to half-a-dozen wars if the parties to them had been empires instead of being fundamentally peace-loving democracies subject to recurring spasms of imperialistic feeling. The anchor that held during these storms was the "disposition favorable to friendship and good neighborhood" with its requirement of frank negotiation and a moral obligation, not always observed, to submit issues to arbitration, which the terms of the Jay-Grenville Treaty of 1794 infused into Anglo-American relationships.

This obligation to find peaceful adjustments for dangerous issues was reinforced by certain prudential considerations. If the British in the stress of a crisis had to take stock of the defencelessness of Canada, the United States had to bear in mind its relative helplessness on the high seas. By good fortune, also, it usually happened that when there was a fire-eater in the State Department of one power, his opposite number was cool-headed and relatively moderate in his attitude. Thus in the McLeod case (the very name of which has faded out of the public memory, though it brought the two countries to the verge of war), Webster did not answer Palmerston in kind; and twenty-five years later, when Seward the expansionist was Secretary of State, there was patience and wisdom in the British attitude.

Policies of negotiation, and arbitration (as a possible last resort), are not an assurance of decisions which are unopen to challenge. At times they merely provide a compromise in which the weaker contestant, by taking something less than its just rights, protects itself from the full consequences of a resort to force. The "unguarded frontier" was determined and defined by a whole series of negotiations of this type. Of the boundary between Canada and

the United States, André Siegfried says in his *Canada*: "There is no natural boundary between the two countries, but merely a political frontier along the parallel of latitude. The very straightness of the boundary betrays its artificiality."

As an exercise in historical disputation, nothing would be easier than to make out a fairly convincing case for the contention that from the negotiations at Paris in 1783 right down to the settlement of the dispute over Oregon, the British, on every occasion, yielded territory to which they could lay the better claim on historical grounds; and nothing would be more futile, if the desire is to put our relations with the United States upon a durable and workable basis for the future. Our boundary is artificial (with the exception of that furnished by the Great Lakes), but it in fact represents the maximum alternative to what would have been the result of a rigorous fulfilment of "manifest destiny" by the stronger power. Not to have yielded on the Ohio country, on the complicated question of how to apply the provision calling for a boundary running "due west" from the Lake of the Woods to the Mississippi, and on the Oregon dispute, would have meant a resort to force. This might as well be recognized and admitted with no accompanying pangs. Indeed, it was fortunate that in the Oregon dispute President Polk was so busily engaged as the agent of "Manifest Destiny" in Mexico and California, that he felt it politically safe not to implement his campaign pledge of "Fifty-Four, Forty or Fight" or Canada would probably have been barred from access to the Pacific Ocean.

The term "unguarded frontier" represents a comparatively recent acceptance of the view that war between Canada and the United States is unthinkable. With the two countries thrice on the verge of war in the twenty-five years between 1840 and 1865, according to the statements of responsible public men at the time, the guarding of the frontier had to be a matter of concern in the capitals of the United States, Great Britain and Canada. Defence considerations indeed took precedence over all other matters. Lord Ashburton, justifying the boundary adjustments between Canada and the United States to which he agreed in 1842, said that he had made greater sacrifices than the thing was worth in order that he might "satisfy certain military critics by bringing the Americans from off the Crest of the highlands which overlook the valley of the St. Lawrence, so as to give us the command of those heights."

Thus military considerations which have long since been emptied of value were given precedence over real national interests. Among these concessions was his consenting to the cession to the United States of Rouse's Point, where the American military authorities had built a million dollar fort for the protection of Lake Champlain against the British under the mistaken idea "that it was being built on American territory." Further, Lord Ashburton made no effort to support the British view that the right boundary from Lake Superior to the Lake of the Woods was one that would have given Canada part of the State of Minnesota in which the Mesabi iron range is to be found. These concessions are sufficient to indicate the importance which was attached on both sides of the line to preparations against invasion. Indeed, the idea that provision should be made for the defence of Canada against a southern enemy persisted to a comparatively recent date. It was the theme of a book published some thirty years ago. This was written by a Canadian, holding high office in the British army, who thought that if Canada was to be safe, plans made in 1814 by the Duke of Wellington should be brought down to date and fitted to modern conditions.

The significance of developments such as those noted was not that they occurred but that, despite them, the "disposition favorable to friendship and good neighborhood" which Jay's Treaty (nobly termed a Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation) sought to promote, was never permanently impaired. Differences which in Europe would have sent armies marching over the frontier were adjusted, sometimes at what appeared to be the last hour; and while there have been irregular forays across the border-line, no shot has been fired with official intent during the longest period of peace known to mankind. Indeed, the differences, while they were officially raging, did little to interrupt or qualify the processes of good neighbourhood in which the people of both countries joined.

In all the works dealing with Canadian-American relations, including this volume by Mr McInnis, not enough attention is given to a service rendered to Canada, albeit unwittingly, by the United States. This has been the contribution which our neighbour has made to Canada's rise from colonial dependence to nationhood, both as exemplar and as warning. The subject is much too large to be dealt with here, but some instances may be noted. One of the most telling arguments in Lord Durham's report in favour of an enlargement of Canada's status was his warning that the Ca-

nadian surrounded on all sides by the influence of the United States, must be given a nationality of his own if this influence was not to become all-powerful. It was fear of United States aggression that made possible the miracle of Confederation. The prompt extension of the Dominion to the Pacific was to save British Columbia from the temptation to become a state of the American Union. To come nearer to our own times, Theodore Roosevelt's big stick tactics in the matter of the Alaska boundary dispute put life and vigour into a movement, which up to that time had languished, to give Canada the right and power to attend to her own external affairs. Here is a theme ready to hand for some writer interested in Canadian-American relationships.

Canadian relations with the United States from the time the revolting colonies took form as a nation, down to comparatively recent times were thus far from static; there was something doing most of the time. The recital of them makes a thrilling, colourful story full of dramatic happenings and moments of keen suspense; it loses nothing in the telling by Mr McInnis. Nothing of importance in the long record is missed, and in his book the facts are well arranged and skilfully presented. It deals more adequately than any other single volume with matters which should be within the knowledge of Canadians who are interesting themselves in the present relations between Canada and the United States, and preparing themselves to take an intelligent interest in the important question of the form and direction of future developments. Mr McInnis does not shrink from considering various possibilities in this connection, including a return by the United States to policies of isolation which would once more raise between the two countries barriers that are now in process of demolition. But he looks forward to something very different—to a relationship of such range and intimacy that its effects will be felt far beyond the borders of these two nations, in keeping with the ideal voiced by Mackenzie King in speaking of the Ogdensburg Agreement: "In the furtherance of this new world order Canada, in liaison between the British Commonwealth and the United States, is fulfilling a manifest destiny."

THE REFORMATION AGAIN[1]

G. G. COULTON

This small volume of 136 pages is connected with one of the most curious episodes in modern literary history. About twenty years ago, a "Westminster Catholic Federation" was formed, under the patronage of Cardinal Bourne, in order to put pressure upon publishers and the London County Council for the revision of school history manuals in a direction less unfavourable to the Roman Church. Prominent in this Federation was Mr E. Eyre, who contributed liberally also from his own private fortune. The work was so strictly private that the officials have never been prevailed upon to deposit, even in the British Museum, a single copy of the three bulky volumes which constituted its first general report to the numerous members.[2] Soon afterwards, Mr Eyre expended time, energy and money upon a *History of European Civilization*, in seven large volumes, for which he collected a numerous and curiously varied band of contributors. His object, as explained in the Preface, was to counteract certain tendencies of modern historiography, nationalistic and fatalistic, tempted to believe that whatever succeeds is that which ought to succeed. As against this, he was anxious to revert to that purer light which reigned in Europe during the centuries of Religious Unity. He paid his contributors liberally, and recruited them as he chose. All these seven volumes, therefore, are History with a Purpose, frankly avowed. That is not the highest kind, but neither is it the lowest; and, though the large majority of Mr Eyre's contributors were remarkable mainly for their religious orthodoxy, he was able to enlist also a few of real distinction, such as the Oxford Professors J. L. Myres and F. M. Powicke. Nobody will for a moment suspect such scholars of yielding to editorial pressure; but Mr Eyre would naturally choose those whose known opinions would be least likely to contrast too violently with the general spirit of this Co-operative History.

Professor Powicke's own essay is summarized in his first sentence, which is naturally quoted as a clear key-note by the only

[1] *The Reformation in England*, by F. M. POWICKE. Oxford University Press, 1941, $2.00.

[2] For much fuller details of these activities, see my *Romanism and Truth*, I, xv and 120-6; II, 310; and *Sectarian History*, 9, 36, 46, 101. See also J. W. Poynter, *Roman Catholic Scheme for Tampering with School Histories* (Church Association, Buckingham St., London, W.C.2).

two reviews which I have seen.[3] He writes: "The one definite thing which can be said about the Reformation in England is that it was an act of State."[4] Yet this is far less definite than might appear at first sight. Can this complicated process, with all its ups and downs during four reigns, be adequately labelled off-hand as "an act"? Again, Professor Powicke is among those who warn us most emphatically against the anachronism of separating too clearly State and Church.[5] What is the relation, then, between that State whose quasi-ecclesiastical character we must never forget, and this State which, four hundred years ago, dealt a blow from which Church and Civilization are still reeling, and which Mr Eyre has devoted his life to redress? As we read on, we see that *State*, throughout this book, means only the Government. Therefore, does not this key-sentence, placed in the forefront and formulated as our one definite verity, convey at best a misleading half-truth? The New York reviewer, evidently an enthusiastic Roman Catholic, seizes upon this opening sentence, quotes it in full, and heads his article "A King's Revolution." He proceeds: "Nowhere does [the author] suggest that there was anything particularly holy about the reformers"; and in that trenchant summary there is a regrettable substratum of truth. For Professor Powicke, despite his earnestness and his high literary qualities, ignores almost completely the factor to which modern historiography, whatever may be its faults elsewhere, is giving more and more importance from generation to generation. He is hypnotized by Church and State, too often in the narrower sense in which those are only terms for Clergy and Government, and forgets the common man. Or, more strictly speaking, he neglects this factor on principle, for reasons which are no less carefully studied in his epilogue than that opening sentence was composed as a prologue. He there writes:

> With the details of theological and liturgical controversy I have not been concerned; nor have I dwelt upon the ever present element of human tragedy. The Reformation in England had its dramatic, even its grim moments, for religion in the sixteenth century could be a very grim business; but to heighten the drama may be to obscure it. History can never afford to neglect the hum-

[3] *The Times Literary Supplement*, 1936, 540, and *New York Times Book Review*, July 26, 1942.

[4] In the Eyre volume, these last five words ran "created a State Church."

[5] E.g., in his *Medieval England*, 129: "History, from the days of the conversion of the people onward, gave more reality to the doctrine that society was a single organism."

drum influence upon affairs, as they unroll themselves from day to day before an unknown and unregarded future, of the instinctive sanity of the common man, holding fast to his life in the security of an old and established commonwealth.

From these rather vague reflections two points seem to emerge. First, that History cannot afford to neglect the common man, though in fact we have practically ignored him throughout these 135 pages. And, secondly, that among common men the most worthy of notice are those who live sanely and securely upon the traditions of the past. History (it seems) would risk obscuring the truth if she officiously obtruded herself into the thoughts and actions of those other common men who, while respecting the work of their forefathers, were yet haunted by the need for changes in their own changing world. That kind of man is portrayed in *Piers Plowman*, almost unique in medieval literature for its revelation of ordinary humanity in all its moods. Yet that book remains still conspicuous among the mass of documents in which England is so rich, and amid which our universities move with so little scientific attention. The true perspective of the Middle Ages will never be seen until we have Chairs of Social History, such as Cambridge contemplated a few years ago, but was compelled to abandon under financial pressure. Then alone will first-rate scholars be able to devote themselves, without paralysing thought for the morrow, to exploring the bye-ways and the obscure corners, and correcting that time-honoured complex by which a few striking figures are taken as typical of all Church or all State, dazzling us thus in a lime-light behind which we see only a confused glimmer of ordinary people.

Professor G. M. Trevelyan has remarked concerning Bishop Creighton, whose influence was so deservedly enormous when the oldest of us were scarcely out of our teens, that his cult of impartiality sometimes blinded him to the full perspective of history: "In his treatment of Luther, all that he says is both fair and accurate; yet from Creighton alone you would not guess that Luther was a great man or the Reformation a stirring and remarkable movement."[6] The temptations of impartiality are almost as dangerous as the original sin of bias, in proportion as they are more subtle. "Appeasement" is thus imported into questions where deep and almost irreconcilable differences of principle are at stake. Yet, if those questions are still so thorny, is it not because the axe is not

[6] *Clio, a Muse*, 50.

laid to the roots of the jungle, by both sides, with all the vigour that social decency will permit? Creighton's was a magnificent gesture, but not true history, when he granted points to what he looked upon as the weaker side. Points are not ours to grant. Even for our silences we are responsible, as the world has seen in modern politics. Nor are easy concessions grateful, at bottom, even to the other side; condescension is not complimentary, and may easily retard rather than hasten a solid working agreement. *Mysterium faciunt, et pacem appellant.* Sixty years ago, a remarkable work of Anglo-Roman appeasement took the world by storm: the novel of *John Inglesant.* It fascinated Gladstone; but his friend Lord Acton, sincere Roman Catholic as he was, pointed out that the author's omissions had falsified the balance in favour of that Church. For his conciliatory "fifty-fifty" result was obtained partly by minimizing the activity and influence of the Inquisition; and Acton's judgment ran: "[Here is] an account which studiously omits the real issues of the time. The part of Hamlet is omitted, by desire .... To keep these abominations out of sight is the same offence as to describe the Revolution without the guillotine. The reader knows no more than old Caspar what it was all about."[7] So is it with this present volume; and indeed Professor Powicke himself confesses to something of old Caspar's bewilderment. He writes on page 7: "The general acquiescence [in Henry VIII's anti-papal and anti-clerical actions] is one of the most mysterious things in our history." So also writes his deferential reviewer in *The Times Literary Supplement.* Let us glance therefore, in such brief detail as space permits, at the main points omitted or neglected in this volume, though they seem of great importance for the solution of the mystery.

Two conspicuous subjects are those of Indulgences and the Bible. From at least 1250 onwards, we find pious Churchmen complaining that ignorant folk are encouraged in sin by the belief that the bare payment of money buys them off.[8] In 1450, Thomas Gascoigne was one of the greatest Chancellors Oxford University ever had. He repeatedly stigmatized the Indulgence system as one of the most deadly sores of the Church: "Sinners say nowadays, 'I care not what or how many evils I do before God; for I can get at once, without the least difficulty, plenary remittance of any

[7] *Letters to Mary Gladstone*, 141.

[8] For fuller quotations, see my *Sectarian History*, 40 ff.

guilt or sin whatsoever through an Indulgence granted me by the Pope, whose written grant I have bought for fourpence, or for the stake of a game of ball . . . sometimes, for the hire of a prostitute.'" Erasmus, half a century later, gives similar evidence. Yet of all this there is no hint in the present volume. The fight for the Vernacular Bible, again, is indeed told at some length, since Government was so directly concerned in its last stages; but it is told with such omissions and suggestions as to render it extremely misleading (pp. 70 ff.). The whole atmosphere is thus distorted. A single sentence from St John Fisher would change the impression at once. That great bishop, in his Commentary on the Seven Penitential Psalms, undertaken at the request of Henry VII's mother, wrote: "An we take heed and call to mind how many vices reign nowadays in Christ's Church, as well in the clergy as in the common people; how many also be unlike in their living unto such in times past, perchance we shall think that Almighty God slumbereth not only, but also that He hath slept soundly a great season."[9] Such was the England (so Fisher believed) with which Henry VIII had been born to grapple. Let us discount his words, but we must not simply ignore them.

Yet evidence of this kind is too often completely ignored, and for a double reason. High Orthodoxy, on the one hand, is reluctant to admit that real religious feeling played any great part in the Reformation. The Marxist, on the other hand, is little concerned with any but material causes. Let us therefore forget, for the moment, whatever piety there may have been among the Reformers, and study English anti-clericalism from two points of view which neither Traditionalism nor Marxism can ignore. Each will admit that there are two things which every man is concerned to defend: his livelihood and his life.

The common man's livelihood was deeply affected by his relations with the clergy. The tithe was an income-tax of 10 per cent, without any allowance for the peasant's working expenses. Moreover, tithes were demanded in most parts of England from all servants who received as much as 6*s*. 8*d*. a year in wages, apart from board and lodging. In medieval law records, perhaps the most numerous of all are tithe-quarrels. Next, at the peasant's death, when the lord took the best of his beasts or other possessions, the parson commonly took the second best. Thus, squire and

[9]Early English Text Society, 1876, 170.

parson in concert exacted from the common man a death-duty far higher than England has ever taken from any but the wealthiest capitalists, apart from extremest necessities of war. Other dues, voluntary in their origin but now frozen upon the parishioner by immemorial custom, were often bitterly resented. Few accumulations of wealth equalled those of the higher clergy or greater monasteries; and those absentee landlords took from the parish incomparably more than they gave back in the shape of alms. The priest himself was often known to nourish from Church revenues an illegitimate household; or perhaps he was absent altogether from his duties. The two completest surviving Episcopal Visitations (for Hereford Diocese in 1397 and for Oxford County in 1520) show respectively 72 clergy reported as unchaste by the delegates from 281 parishes, and 58 non-residents from 193.

So much for our common man's livelihood; and now for his very life. Professor Powicke deals as lightly with the question of heresy as with that of strong religious convictions. Making allowance for a few exceptions under Henry VIII, he concludes: "Heresy *as such* was an incidental feature in the history of the Reformation" (p. 61). But this vague qualifying phrase which I have underlined is both anachronistic and illogical. It answers to no exact medieval definition; and the writer is apparently thinking of its later definition in the Parliament of 1558-9 and finally by the Anglican Church (pp. 117, 118, 125). Of the heresy laws as they actually affected men's lives in 1530 he has as little to say as about the strong undercurrent of Lollardy. For centuries before this time, the clergy had been tempted to brand as "heresy" anything that they feared and hated. Pope John XXII had practically made heresy of anything that he chose to forbid. In 1407, the English Archbishop Arundel, as Papal Legate, held a Council which decreed the pains of heresy against makers, possessors or readers of unauthorized English Bibles, at a time when no authorized English translation existed. The same pains and penalties were pronounced against all who should obstinately contradict or misinterpret any Papal Decree or Decretal, or Provincial or Synodal Constitution; so also, against the refusal on conscientious grounds to swear in the law-courts. Vehement suspicion of heresy attached, again, to a carpenter's wife who advised a neighbour to eat Thursday's cold meat on Friday, instead of running into debt for fish. Too much has been made of the comparatively infrequent burnings for

Lollardy, as against the deep demoralization of spying and talebearing throughout the country.

This it was which put the coping-stone upon clerical unpopularity. One of the oldest and best-known clauses in Canon Law ran, "The Laity are always extremely hostile to the Clergy." Boniface VIII appealed to this as notorious in his bull *Clericis Laicos;* and the complaint echoes from clerical mouths down the centuries. The Franciscan author of *Dives et Pauper* tells us how unlucky some villagers felt it to meet a priest on the road—more ill-omened "than a toad or a frog." And Bishop FitzJames of London, complaining of the prevailing anti-clericalism of London citizens, conjoins this with their tendency to "heretical pravity." For this friction between spirituality and temporalty is equally significant, with whichever party we may feel inclined to sympathize. One man might grudge to the clergy their comparative immunity in transgression, while others grudged at the parson's power over their own faults, and the archdeacon's fines. In both cases there would be impatience with the system, and especially with the Papacy at the centre of all this bureaucracy. From anti-clericalism it is but a short way to a schism such as Henry engineered; and from schism it needed no advance, but simply continuance, to become heresy.[10] Comparatively few Englishmen, in 1530, may have paid full justice to what the Papacy had done for world unity in the past. But they all knew where the shoe pinched them today; and an increasing number recognized, with Pierre Dubois and Marsilius of Padua and Machiavelli, that Rome had kindled more wars than she had quenched.[11]

One test for popular aquiescence in the Reformation has never, to my knowledge, been applied. In the Middle Ages, a very common political move was to excite interest in the bones of a defunct leader—Simon de Montfort, Thomas of Lancaster, Edward II, Archbishop Scrope, Henry VI are well-known cases in

[10]Professor Powicke writes as though this necessary connection had been first fixed upon the English mind by Elizabeth's Act of Supremacy in 1559 (p. 117). But St Thomas had noted it long since, taking his text from St Jerome (*Sum. Theol.* 2^a 2^{ae} q.XXXIX, art. 8, 4).

[11]In Mr Eyre's sixth volume (pp. 1501 ff.) Mr E. C. Butler approaches the "remarkable phenomenon" that, in the modern world, the Roman Church is freest in the great democratic Protestant countries, while in so-called Catholic states anti-clericalism is most violent. He states this mystery frankly, but he makes no direct attempt to explain it.

point. The *Book of Miracles of Henry VI* is a bulky volume. Yet one of the main reasons for the delay of four centuries in canonizing St Thomas More and St John Fisher was the lack of authenticated miracles. Ordinarily, two such are a *sine qua non;* but here the whole English-speaking world was combed without result. That popular silence gives the lie to Farmer Cobbett's theory that Henry VIII, by some mysterious agency, succeeded in robbing a nation of its moral outlook and living religious faith. However we may magnify the irresistible force of Crown and Parliament in moulding the English Reformation, yet the stuff from which it came was supplied by the English people.

THE MIND OF WORDSWORTH*

J. R. MacGillivray

Even the best books on Wordsworth published during this century have tended to be partial and peripheral. There has been a fine study of the poet's youth and another of his later years. One scholar has examined thoroughly the influence of Hartley's laws of association in forming Wordsworth's theory of poetry, and others, since the discovery of Annette, have speculated darkly about her effect on the author of *Vaudracour and Julia* and the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*. These special studies have been illuminating in their manner and degree, but they have been concerned with only part of the story. There has been no book on Wordsworth as central in its emphasis or as satisfying in its range of understanding as, let us say, Colvin's *Life of Keats* (1917). Probably the most enduring work in the field has been done, not by the biographers and literary critics, but by the editors, notably by Professor de Selincourt, whose exhaustive critical labours on *The Prelude* and the Wordsworth letters have provided the foundation for a worthy biography, and have at last "frighted the reign of Chaos and old Knight."

Professor Havens has not attempted to write the great biography, but he has given us something else which has been badly needed and is of central importance, a thorough, systematic, and well-documented account of Wordsworth's dominant ideas and

**The Mind of a Poet: A Study of Wordsworth's Thought with Particular Reference to The Prelude*, by Raymond Dexter Havens. Baltimore, the Johns Hopkins Press, 1941, $5.00.

beliefs as they appear in his poetry. Yet at first sight his book is curious and perplexing in its form, consisting of ten chapters on persistent ideas in the poetry, followed by about 375 pages of commentary and line-by-line annotation for *The Prelude*. However, the connection between the two parts of the book is made clear by the nature of the notes. They are rarely of the merely factual type, but are intended to provide copious illustration and cross-reference from the most trustworthy source to substantiate what was said in the chapters of the first part about "The Matter-of-factness of Wordsworth," "Passion," "The Ministry of Fear," "Solitude, Silence, Loneliness," "Animism," "Nature," "Anti-Rationalism," "The Mystic Experience," "Religion," and "Imagination." The notes, in other words, are on Wordsworth's thought as emphatically as are the more orderly chapters in the first half of the book.

I would mention two great merits of *The Mind of a Poet*: and first, the author's constant attention to the text of the poems, his consistent effort to understand what Wordsworth means not only when he uses a phrase in one famous context, but when it reappears at a dozen other points. The method requires much cross-reference and much concentration on Wordsworth alone; the disadvantage of the method is a lack of variety and a certain flatness which more friendly critics than Byron have found on occasion in the writings of the bard of Grasmere. Of course a more brilliant appearing book on Wordsworth's ideas could have been written in another way. The real subject would have been the romantic movement with culminating illustrations from our poet. The chapter on "The Ministry of Fear," for example, would have traced the emergence of the idea of pleasing fear in the eighteenth century, with the usual illustrations from books of travel, graveyard poetry, and gothic novels, and with appropriate glancings at the concept of the sublime and the sense of wonder, the whole complex manoeuvre triumphantly completed with suitable quotations from *The Prelude* and "Poems of the Imagination." All this would have proved that Wordsworth held certain ideas and interests in common with the men of his own and the preceding age. What would have been overlooked would have been, not that Wordsworth was like or unlike the romantic writers, but that for the most part he was supremely unconcerned with them and happy to be only himself. His lack of interest in books and in other writers has been frequently remarked, and likewise his delighted concentration on his

own gifts as a poet and a seer. In such a case it would seem to be particularly fruitless to follow the usual methods of literary history. He was not a Milton or a Keats, feeding his imagination on other men's thoughts or words, but on the contrary the most self-sufficient of the great English poets. He who doubts this might undertake to show some direct intellectual connection, supported by clear reference in the poems and letters, between Wordsworth and the putative father of European romanticism whom he is said to resemble in so many ways, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Accordingly Professor Havens has followed what seems to be a sensible and practical, if unusual, course in attempting to understand Wordsworth primarily as he explains himself to the reader. It should be added that for those who also like to go journeying through the eighteenth century in their study of Wordsworth, Professor Havens has provided bibliographical guides.

The other attractive characteristic which I would mention is the good sense and moderation displayed, the avoidance of special pleading and private crochets. Wordsworth has not often been examined with as little prejudice. For almost a century and a half his poetry has been firmly linked in the mind of his readers with a theory of poetic language, or a view of the eighteenth century, or an attitude to the French Revolution, or a religion of nature. Coleridge was of the opinion that Wordsworth had only himself to blame since he deliberately placed the controversial prefaces between the reader and his verse. Professor Havens has attempted wisely to keep his own general opinions about the romantic movement out of the way, letting Wordsworth speak his mind, and especially in the poetry, without the usual professorial rejoinders. In brief, there is much less of the fascinating "history of ideas" in this book than in the writings of the late Irving Babbitt, but much more of the mind of Wordsworth. Persons not interested in that subject are accordingly warned.

One surly complaint in conclusion. In spite of the formidable words of Dr Johnson arrayed so skilfully to guard the notes against criticism by both the wise and the ignorant, I make bold to say that the second half of the book would have been just as useful without a hundred assertions that this line of *The Prelude* is charming and that figure is excellent. The reader likes to imagine that he can make these particular judgments for himself.

NATIONAL STATUS AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS* B. K. SANDWELL

A community of human beings may have external relations without possessing any of the organs which are necessary for community action outside. All that is necessary is that it be a distinct and recognizable community. The external relations of Canada can thus quite properly be conceived as beginning with the earliest foundation of the French colony. Professor Glazebrook does not go so far back as that, for his first chapter, after sketching the nature of the French colony in 1763, goes on at once to describe the beginnings of English-speaking settlement, and then to tell of the cultural and social relations of the new British colonies at a time when anything resembling political relations with any other community was scarcely conceivable. The American War of Independence, setting up a new, independent and purely Western Hemisphere nation alongside of these colonies, rapidly solidified them into a consciousness of their existence as political units of a sort, and by 1815 so good a Tory as Bishop Strachan (whom the author is able to quote to very interesting effect through his access to the unpublished M.A. thesis on "The John Strachan Letter Book" by G. W. Spragge) could speak of the interest of "this country" as something quite distinct from the interest of other parts of the Empire in the Treaty of Ghent. Whatever that distinct interest might have been, there was no way by which the Canadian colonies could advance it; they were helpless in the hands of "our envoys," who were envoys of the British Government. But since the British Government had defended Canada in the war, and would (or at least Strachan hoped so) pay the expense of that defence, the situation was neither too illogical nor too intolerable.

Fifty years later a new element had entered in. The enormously increased population and transit facilities of the United States made it clear that, in Newcastle's words, "no body of troops which England could send would be able to make Canada safe without the efficient aid of the Canadian people." A community which has to rely on its own efforts (even if substantially aided) for its own

*_Canadian External Relations: An Historical Study to 1914_, by G. P. deT. GLAZEBROOK. Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1942, $3.00.

Canada at the Paris Peace Conference, by G. P. deT. GLAZEBROOK. Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1942, $2.00.

defence is bound to develop by degrees a desire to have something to say about its own external relations—and to seek to develop the machinery with which to say it. All but the first one hundred pages of Professor Glazebrook's first volume is devoted to the growth of that desire, to the machinery for its realization, and to the use which was made of the machinery, from the completion of the federation movement in 1873 to the outbreak of the war in 1914—just a century after Bishop Strachan had expressed his distrust of British diplomacy.

Canada, growing throughout that century ever more conscious of the desire to have a say about her external relations, was seldom able to make up her mind what she wanted to say. Only as regards the relations with the neighbouring Republic—vastly the most important of all her relations except those with Great Britain—was her attitude moderately firm and consistent; and the necessity, in those relations, for acting through machinery controlled by Great Britain became more and more galling. The resentment was in no way lessened by the fact that the mid-century saw a "lack of imperial enthusiasm in Great Britain, resulting in what was felt to be a distressingly mild concern for Canadian interests." (One of the charms of these books is their author's capacity for suggestive under-statement.) Canada was becoming a political entity of the kind which needs the power to exert itself effectively in external relations, but external relations can only be carried on officially by a sovereign power, and the long process by which Canada "edged in" to a steadily increasing exercise of sovereignty in external relations is the real core of interest in this book.

The process was materially helped by the astonishing constitutional impasse into which the United States had got itself by various Supreme Court decisions limiting the right of the President-and-Senate as treaty-making authority to impinge upon the field assigned by the constitution to the sovereignty of the individual states. Sir John A. Macdonald was quick to perceive that a treaty-making power which could not bind its own subjects by its own treaties, but had to content itself with promising to "urge upon" the individual states to do this and that, was in no position to object to the British negotiators when they declared that they had no power to bind the young Dominion of Canada; and this principle was consecrated in the Washington Treaty. From that it was but a short step in principle, though a long one in time, to

the stage reached with the French treaty of 1907, when the British ambassador was instructed to sign with the Canadian plenipotentiary, but to take no part in the negotiations; it is strange that Professor Glazebrook makes no reference to this in the present volume, though he discussed it in his paper in *Essays in Canadian History* (ed. R. Flenley). The final stage, of eliminating the British ambassador altogether, was only reached with the Halibut Treaty of 1923.

In those halcyon days before 1914 the external interests of Canada were almost entirely commercial, and her formal external relations naturally took the same line. On all other subjects, and particularly on those relating to military policy in the fast-developing world imbroglio after 1909, Canada had no definite views, and no means of expressing them in action if she had. It was only in 1909 that her government for the first time provided itself with a Department of External Affairs; and the relative unimportance of the machinery of external relations throughout the period is indicated by the fact that only one civil servant is mentioned in the first of these volumes (Joseph Pope, the under-secretary of state who started the movement for a Department), and only two in the second (the late Loring Christie and Colonel O. M. Biggar).

The lack of final responsibility was naturally accompanied by the lack of that experience and wisdom which responsibility brings, and a constant failure to realize the difficulties involved. Professor Glazebrook has done Canada a notable service by his calm and judicial appraisement of the real merits and demerits of the conduct of British negotiators in regard to Canada in such matters as the Alaska Boundary ("nor could the average Canadian appreciate that firmness in pressing even a good case must be tempered by gauging the resultant friction") and the Anglo-Japanese alliance.

But the gravest weakness in the Canadian position was the result of refusal to accept certain responsibilities (involving co-operation) which could have been assumed at any moment after 1900. "It is not that Canada was deliberately excluded from British councils: it is probable that the British government would have welcomed consultation. But consultation, as successive Canadian governments had seen, involved responsibility; and they preferred to forgo the one in order to avoid the other. That they were none the less committed to the results of British policy was the anomaly of the position and the price they paid."

The truth is that what Canada seems to have wanted during these formative years was full responsibility of her government to the Canadian people, unaccompanied by any responsibility to other communities in or out of the Commonwealth. The first responsibility is the result of constitutional independence, which she desired. The second is the result of external commitments, of which she was afraid. Her inexperience had left her unaware of the fact that satisfactory external relations cannot be maintained without commitments, and on a perpetual basis of "Parliament will decide." Professor Glazebrook's second volume deals with a period in which she made a notable advance from this position as a result of her military share in the first Great War.

This book on Canada's participation in the peace-making is one which must be doubly welcome at this moment of rapid approach to another attempt at world settlement. Here for the first time Canada's disabilities as a "colony," a subject of the legislative power of another nation, gave place to a new set of disabilities as a "federal" nation, with the same inability to bind its member provinces as the United States has to bind its member states. By 1918 the colonial limitation had disappeared completely except for the lingering doubts in the minds of foreign governments unaware of the difference between the nominal and the real powers of the Parliament at Westminster—which had not yet been clarified by the Statute of Westminster. But the federal problem reared its head as soon as labour conditions became a matter of negotiation. Mr Doherty optimistically declared that the treaty clause of the B.N.A. Act "seems wide enough" to confer the necessary powers on the Canadian Parliament; but he spoke without prophetic knowledge of the position to be taken later by the Privy Council on this point.

Canada's interest in the details of peace-making as they concerned European frontiers, reparations, plebiscites and the like was of the smallest. Her attention was concentrated on the League of Nations and the I.L.O., and on the problem of getting herself into those bodies with "a status which corresponded with their [the Canadian representatives'] own idea of their country's position and not that of the legalists of other countries, who insisted on using the hard-and-fast classifications of an earlier day." In this the Canadians were eminently successful, and Sir Robert Borden "comes out as a diplomat of some repute."

But it is impossible to say that the achievement of the desired "status" at this particular moment and in this particular way was wholly a good thing, even for Canada, and it may have been a very bad thing for the world in general. For Canada once again, even at the very moment of achieving her status, recoiled from the responsibilities which went with it. The Doherty memorandum on Article 10 of the Covenant could hardly have been penned with greater vigour by a United States isolationist, and the whole tendency of Canada after the treaty was to whittle down its obligations. Indeed the main difference between the American and the Canadian attitudes on the acceptance of the League obligations might be expressed by saying that the Americans refused them and Canada accepted them only because of her association with Great Britain.

But on Anglo-American relations, and on the American attitude towards the League, the effect of the sudden erection of all the self-governing Dominions into a species of independent nationhood was disastrous. Professor Glazebrook is able to quote some significant passages from the 1919 diary, unpublished, of G. L. Beer, an important member of the American delegation, which show how thoroughly many Americans were convinced that separate Dominion membership in the League was a device to enhance British influence beyond proper limits. Had this development been deferred until Ireland had acquired Dominion status this untoward result would have been greatly lessened.

The effect of the perusal of these two valuable volumes can hardly be other than to impress on the mind of any sincere Canadian the truth that the achievement of nationhood is not merely a matter of being recognized as qualified to sign treaties and sit at peace tables. These are merely the trappings of nationhood. The real thing consists in the acceptance, and the honourable performance, of the obligations of a "good" nation in a world of nations some more and some less good—obligations which are not greatly different from those of a good man in a community where some men are not good.

REPORTER AT WAR*

EDGAR McINNIS

Any writer or speaker whose task is to deal with the progress of the war must ungrudgingly acknowledge his debt to the press and radio reporters upon whose work he so very largely depends. If we were confined to information from official sources, our knowledge would be scanty indeed. It is because the best of the reporters go beyond these sources to supply first-hand information, based on their own experience and contacts, that they have earned our gratitude for the measure of enlightenment which we possess.

The enlightenment is of course very far from complete. The correspondents themselves are frequently unable to tell us all that they know. But within the restraints imposed by censorship they have done much to give us a picture which is free from major distortions. The great organs of information in Britain and the United States have developed a notable group of honest and indefatigable men who have made it their fundamental purpose to present the truth as they see it. They have sought it in remote regions at extreme personal risk. They have reported it in the face of technical difficulties and official obstruction. It is not as a rule the whole truth; but within the limits imposed by circumstances it has been enough to give us a knowledge of the main course of events, even though many significant facts are still lacking.

That does not mean that the press as a whole is not open to serious criticism for its handling of war news. Only too often the immediate truth has been obscured by a willingness to play up unfounded rumours or to present speculative and misleading statements as though they were actual facts. And there are notorious instances of deliberate distortion of the news in the interest of a political bias. The task of sifting the reliable from the false or dubious is one which constantly confronts any reader in search of accuracy. But it is fair to say that the worst offenders are usually editors at home rather than reporters at the scene of action. As a rule, a man's own record provides a standard for his reliability and enables the informed reader to select the sources upon whose consistent honesty he can reasonably depend.

There is of course a considerable body of vital information to

*_Suez to Singapore_, by CECIL BROWN. New York, Random House [Toronto, Macmillan Co. of Canada], 1942, $4.50.

which even the best correspondents do not have access. The purveyors of "inside stories" are numerous, but their wares are usually disappointing. There are some instances of a time lag between a reporter's knowledge of events and the actual release of his story. The war in the Pacific has provided a number of examples, including the year's delay in making public the full story of Pearl Harbour. But it is remarkable how seldom the books of correspondents add anything of major significance to our actual knowledge. They provide us with interesting sidelights and valuable corroborative details, but they seldom alter the general picture which is already available.

That is not the result of censorship as such. The vital secrets remain as secrets known only to a small group at the centre of power. The correspondent released from censorship on his return to his native land is still limited by the gaps in his own knowledge. Those who have come out of Germany have been able to give us little accurate information about the state of production or conditions on the home front that has not been already made available. Still less can they tell us what factors motivated the great strategic decisions of the High Command beyond what can be seen by the intelligent outside observer. In one way that is a tribute to the amount of news which the press actually succeeds in gathering. But it remains true that the facts which provide the real key to the pattern of the war still lie very largely beyond our reach. Our knowledge of events is great. Our full understanding of their significance must wait until the secrets of the inner councils are revealed.

Cecil Brown's book is a good example of these virtues and limitations. As a radio reporter whose task was to keep listeners informed of the latest developments, his first interest lay in the reporting of spot news. This was a function which he brilliantly fulfilled. The high spot of his career as a correspondent was inevitably his eye-witness description of the sinking of the *Repulse*. Seldom has a reporter been presented with a more unique opportunity, and few could have risen to it more magnificently. That episode remains the most vivid and interesting part of his book. He is able to describe it in far more detail than he could within the limits of his original news despatch, and it is a fine and lively piece of descriptive action, admirable in its directness and the way it conveys the sense of physical detail with an almost visual clarity.

There are other episodes whose presentation has these same qualities even though they can hardly compete in dramatic content with the loss of the *Repulse*. Mr Brown's account of his experiences during the Syrian campaign bring to life that obscure and half-forgotten operation. His story of a trip into the western desert gives the tangible feel of that desolate battleground. When he sticks to experiences of this kind he is at his best as a descriptive reporter.

On the other hand, he seldom attempts to give a general and coherent picture of operations in these various theatres, and only rarely records facts which are outside his direct experience. He offers no explanation of the replacement of Wavell by Auchinleck, though he was in Cairo at the time and present at interviews with both men. He has an account of an important off-the-record interview with Sir Robert Brooke-Popham at Singapore shortly before the outbreak of hostilities, and he occasionally mentions facts about the Malayan campaign which illustrate its nature and its defects. But he attempts no summary of the campaign as a whole; and he has little light to shed on such controversial matters as the lack of fighter assistance to the *Prince of Wales*. The controversies over the conduct of Admiral Phillips will have to be settled without the help of Mr Brown.

This is, in fact, an intensely personal book. Mr Brown is recording his own experiences; and since many of those experiences had to do with his contact with the censors, that is the theme which overshadows his whole story. He has considerable justification for his complaints, but one can understand why the censors on their part became exasperated with his unyielding insistence on trivialities. It was not a vital matter to report the revelry of Singapore. There were other things which he could have attempted—the solid facts of the campaign up-country, for instance—which would have been more worthy of the energy he expended in his battles with the British officials. There is quoted on page 515 a broadcast which he gave from Sydney, that is a good example of pettiness on both sides. The censor's deletions seem over-cautious, but hardly important enough for the indignation which the author expends upon them.

The result of the succession of querulous diatribes which crowd these pages is to throw the whole book out of balance. The really significant and interesting material is almost lost in a mass of per-

sonal detail which is not only inconsequential but boring. Yet the material is there, and in spite of the petulance which mars so many of its pages, this book is an honest and revealing record of experiences which translates the war into personal terms. If in this case they are occasionally distorted by the personality of the author, there is still enough clear and vigorous writing to make the positive merits of the book far outweigh its very real shortcomings.

ELIZABETHAN SOCIETY AND LETTERS[1]

MALCOLM MACKENZIE ROSS

It is inevitable that our generation should perform a sociological autopsy on the body of past literature. "At a time when the modern world seems about to disintegrate into chaos it is natural for us to speculate curiously on the origins of our present way of life."[2] The scholarship of fact for the sake of fact and the criticism of art for the sake of art seem equally superficial and unsatisfactory in this time of the breaking of nations. The emphasis on the sociological approach to literature which began more than a decade ago to dominate the critical writings of the "little journals" is increasingly evident in the work of the academic scholar. The Modern Language Association has recently introduced a section for the discussion of "Literature and Society" at its annual meeting; and the Committee on Renaissance Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies exhibits a new and vital interest in literary history which will "attempt to describe and explain the relation of [this] literature to other intellectual and emotional forces, as well as to economic, social, and political conditions."[3]

There can be no doubt that the more advanced scholar of our

[1] *The State in Shakespeare's Greek and Roman Plays*, by JAMES PHILLIPS, JR. New York, Columbia University Press.

Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson, by L. C. KNIGHTS. London, Chatto and Windus.

Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England, by LOUIS B. WRIGHT. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press.

England's Eliza, by ELKIN CALHOUN WILSON. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.

"Anti-Democracy in Shakespeare: A Re-Survey," by BRENTS STIRLING (*Modern Language Quarterly*, II, no. 3., 1941).

[2] Louis B. Wright, "Introduction to a Survey of Renaissance Studies," (*Modern Language Quarterly*, II, 1941, 355).

[3] *Ibid.*, 361.

day is seeking to free himself from the bonds of subjectivism and narrow specialization. But I would not imply that his dissatisfaction with romantic criticism and orthodox literary history has led him always to a sure methodology. The works listed above, all of them sociological in concern, by no means represent a unified "movement" in purpose or in method. And the diversity of aims and techniques evident here is consequent not only upon differences in political bias, but also upon the tentative, experimental nature of the new "search for truth." The literary man, impelled by the ruling passion of his age to seek in social history the explanation of cultural phenomena, often approaches the task nervously, conscious of the frown of his less adventurous colleague "the safe scholar," conscious, too, of the social scientist's quizzical smile as, contemptuous and unafraid, he observes his province invaded by the rank amateur. Perhaps for safety's sake, the literary scholar clutches the hand of the tallest stranger he can find in the strange new land. Dr Phillips will not so much as tip-toe without Professor Allen at his side. Mr Knights marks the footsteps of Professor Tawney. Nor are they to be criticized for their deference to the authority of the historian and the political economist. The trouble is not that they have jilted Kittredge and Bradley for a pack of outlanders—some transference of allegiance was necessary. The danger lies rather in the mechanical divisions which still beset the social sciences themselves. It may indeed serve the interests of the academic curriculum to separate politics from economics. But it is unsafe for the literary scholar to adopt these curricular divisions in reaching out for a new synthesis of social and cultural values. The sociological criticism of literature, to be valid, must recognize and analyse the fluent interrelation of all discernible social and cultural factors in the given historical moment. Nor must that moment be detached and isolated from its context in time. The imposition of a sharply-defined method derived from one or the other of the social sciences may needlessly suppress or exclude or distort elements relevant to the solution of the scholar's problem.

Of the works under discussion in this article, *The State in Shakespeare's Greek and Roman Plays* and "Anti-Democracy in Shakespeare" deal primarily with political questions. Both Dr Phillips and Dr Stirling regard Shakespeare as a conservative. Phillips correlates key passages in the Greek and Roman plays

with the dominant political ideas of the sixteenth century, and finds Shakespeare neither an aristocrat nor a democrat, but a monarchist. Stirling in general concurs, though he tends to lump together monarchist and aristocratic politics. A brief summary of each argument will be appropriate here.

Phillips sets out to show the dramatic importance of political theories in Shakespeare. Of the three Roman plays he writes (p. 206):

> One is almost tempted to see a cyclic unity in these plays, a unity which embraces the three principal systems of government recognized in Shakespeare's day. In *Coriolanus* democracy is tried and found wanting, for it fails to conform to the principles of political organization ordained by universal law. In *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* aristocracy is in turn rejected, and for the same reason. Thus in the course of the three plays Rome moves slowly but inevitably towards monarchy, the form of the state which the Renaissance considered divinely authorized.

In the Greek plays individual characters are shown in conflict with the "universal truths" of Renaissance political theory. "It is by so representing the violation of political theories in the history of actual states that the playwright makes abstract concepts dramatically effective" (p. 207).

What are these "universal" political truths invoked by Shakespeare? Following J. W. Allen,[4] Phillips tells us that, despite minor disagreements, political theorists of the sixteenth century almost unanimously "acknowledged stratification and monarchy as essential to the structure of the state, obedience to vocation and order as essential to its successful operation, and common justice and welfare as its aim and purpose" (pp. 20-1). He has no difficulty in finding a reflection of this almost totalitarian view of the state in Shakespeare. For instance, the famous Canterbury speech in *Henry V* (I, ii, 183-213) illustrates the conventional concept of "a divinely ordained social and political structure in which vocationally determined degrees of ascending merit function coordinately under a sovereign governor for the welfare of the whole organization." Shakespeare seems even to borrow rhetorical devices from the political writing of the day.

But it is disturbing to notice that this "divinely ordained social and political structure," with the strong emphasis on stratification, order and obedience, is a characteristically mediaeval concept.

[4] *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century.*

Commenting on the fact that sixteenth-century political theory in England was mediaeval in outlook, Professor Allen remarks: "Mediaeval conceptions received at that time a fresh expression. The writers who furnished that expression were, in the main, reproducing mediaeval conceptions of the meaning and purpose of the social and political order, and of the duty of every man in his station to see to it that his activities were strictly related to that end."[5] We cannot but suspect that, although on the face of it Shakespeare may seem to have adopted the mediaeval *formulation*, his understanding of the state and of the character of the monarchy differed widely from the mediaeval. Indeed, we wonder whether the curious revival of mediaeval theories in the sixteenth century is merely a revival, or whether the old names and phrases do not take on a new meaning. Are the familiar abstractions stuffed with a new and different content? Is it conceivable that Shakespeare's "conservatism"—his passion for order, his veneration of the crown, his fear of civil discord—is derived from mediaeval political theory, or from political theory at all? In short, is it valid to interpret Shakespeare's political ideas and their dramatic significance on the purely political level?

Dr Stirling's "Anti-Democracy in Shakespeare" makes a provocative contribution to the discussion of this problem. Although he professes to reach no hard and fast conclusions on the nature of political ideas in the plays, the questions he raises are merely rhetorical. He believes that careful inquiry "may enable us to place Shakespeare more accurately as a greatly gifted spokesman from the conservative side, during one of the main transition periods of English history." Like Phillips, he finds that Shakespeare accepts a rigid social stratification as necessary and good. Characters who attempt to cross class lines are treated roughly (witness Malvolio and Oswald); any and every threat to the *status quo* is a danger and an evil. Such a treatment of society is "quite aristocratic and quite Elizabethan." The approach in this article to Shakespeare's ideas is not through political theory. The sources which Phillips has consulted with such care are ignored. Here is no theoretical-idealist position hostile both to the masses and to the court. Stirling suspects that Shakespeare has taken the side of aristocracy in the early phases of the struggle which was to culminate in the Civil War. On the correct assumption that the

[5] *Ibid.*, 153; quoted by Phillips, 22.

Elizabethan dramatization of history was meant to have a contemporary reference, he looks to the period of 1590-1610 for evidence of social division and unrest—and he finds the threat of foreign invasion, unemployment and vagabondage, the clash over monopolies and trade restrictions, the Essex rebellion, the Gunpowder Plot, etc. There can be no doubt of the tension of the age, and there can be no doubt that Shakespeare's fear of revolt as expressed in terms of the past was aroused by his sense of the present.

But does this fear take a clear-cut anti-democratic form? Stirling mentions the treatment of Cade, Jack Straw and Wat Tyler as evidence of Shakespeare's distrust of popular movements. He believes that because of their attacks on the mob, "*Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus* could have been no less than verbal feasts for Elizabethan anti-democrats." If this be so, what of *Antony and Cleopatra*, with its apparent bias against the "aristocratic" form of government? And if Cade, Jack Straw and Wat Tyler are dangerous folk, are not Hotspur and Glendower, Goneril and Regan equally dangerous? Certainly it might be said, from the same type of evidence used by Stirling to prove the contrary, that Shakespeare frequently provided "verbal feasts" for those who suspected the loyalty of the great nobles.

Furthermore, it is unhistorical to assume that the Elizabethan distrust of the masses and of popular leaders is essentially "aristocratic" in character. While Stirling insists that the social restlessness of 1590-1610 forecasts the Civil War, he forgets, apparently, the social policies of Oliver Cromwell. He should read Shakespeare's treatment of the Peasant Revolt against the record of Cromwell's suppression of the Digger movement. The attitude in both cases is clearly middle-class. It is the attitude of the capitalist landowner and the London merchant, characteristic of the period of land enclosure and the expansion of the wool trade. By an odd paradox, Charles, Laud and Strafford were to be more solicitous of the welfare of the dispossessed than were the Puritan revolutionists. Obviously, practical measures taken by Elizabeth against the peasant and lower classes do not indicate "aristocratic" politics. Nor is Stirling correct in his assumption that Elizabeth's hostility to the Puritan left-wing reveals a courtly bias against an important segment of the middle class. A book like Haller's *The Rise of Puritanism* makes it abundantly clear that

Puritan ideology remained on the lunatic fringe of middle-class political practice until the economic urgencies of the seventeenth century induced the dominant sections of the bourgeoisie to accept its forceful if fanatical discipline. The dislike of the crabbed Puritan in Elizabethan times was by no means confined to the courtier, as the merest glance at the literature of the period will testify.

There would seem to be no clear evidence, then, either in the plays or in the contemporary reference of the plays, that Shakespeare is a spokesman for the aristocracy. Indeed, there would seem to be more evidence for Phillips' contention that Shakespeare is *both* anti-democratic and anti-aristocratic. I have raised objections to this contention, objections which will be clear in a moment (if I am permitted to keep several balls in the air at once). It is possible that Phillips' thesis is correct but not true. Meanwhile Stirling, though he muffs his history, demonstrates, I think, that Shakespeare was no pale apostle of mediaeval political theory but a partisan writing in and for an age which took sides. The actual social context of Shakespeare's political environment has been brought into the discussion. What is the importance of this living environment for the work of Shakespeare and for Elizabethan literature in general? What is the real content of the conventional political theorizing which one finds reflected in the plays?

The answer must be given, partly at least, in terms of economic history. L. C. Knights, in his *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson*, attempts to show the impact of economic forces on Elizabethan culture. Although mainly concerned with the motivation for Jonson's satirical attacks on monopolistic greed, Mr Knights gives an excellent summary of the development of capitalism in Tudor and Jacobean England. The period's history is that of the displacement of the feudal mode of production by the capitalist mode. It is thus (Knights is following Professor Tawney) the history of the rise to power of the middle class. For our purposes, several significant ideas emerge from Knights' book. (1) The feudal world lives on in a rearguard fight against the "new order." This struggle is represented by the resistance of the peasant masses to land enclosures, of the guildsmen to speculative and monopolistic trade practices, and of the right-wing of the old nobility to the growing power of "the new men." (2) Large and important sections of the old nobility entered middle-class enter-

prise, while successful merchants bought their way into the aristocracy. (3) The monarchy itself threw its weight on the side of commercial expansion. Certainly Elizabeth, throughout the greater part of her reign, can be said to have served middle-class interests. Both the commercially-minded nobility and the middle class stood to profit from the encouragement which the monarchy gave to industry and trade in the days when capitalist enterprise was being firmly established and when there was urgent need to smash the resistance of feudalism at home and abroad.

It was therefore in the interests of the crown, of the progressive aristocracy, and of the middle class, to preserve this balance of class forces so profitable to them all. Shakespeare's "conservatism," when studied in this light, is clearly nothing less than a determination to conserve the gains of the main advance over feudalism. The Cades and the Hotspurs represented not "democracy" and "aristocracy," but feudalism at its two levels. The monarchy symbolized not an abstract principle of authority and order above all factions, but a progressive if precarious fusion of middle-class and courtly aspirations.

Is it not probable that the contemporary political theorizing which found its way into the plays of Shakespeare, though mediaeval in terminology, was in dramatic content and effect a rationalization of the need for strong central authority to preserve this new bourgeois, anti-feudal, anti-mediaeval emphasis? If so, the *conventional* use of political categories such as "democratic" and "aristocratic" in our sociological investigation of this period can be misleading. The democratic idea and the democratic struggle emerged later, after the monarchy had ceased to further the expansion of middle-class interests, and when, as Knights points out, the new and inexplicable phenomenon of the capitalist cycle, with its dizzying booms and slumps, had finally shattered "the single society" and the practical partnership of court and city.[6]

Knights will support my objection to the abstract method of Phillips' book. Without a clear and dynamic conception of the

[6]This disintegration was under way in the reign of James I but did not assume clear political forms until the reign of Charles. Although some critics have detected the note of "pessimism" in the Jacobean works of Shakespeare, no one has been able to show a shift in his attitude to monarchy or in his basic conception of society. He may have sensed the growing threat to the Elizabethan synthesis. But he remained an Elizabethan.

economic forces of the period, the scholar's understanding of the role of political ideas in Shakespeare, and in Elizabethan literature generally, will be shadowy and unsure. But I am afraid that the simple substitution of economic history for political theory will not provide us with all the tools we require. One cannot proceed in a straight and easy line from a knowledge of the economic background to an understanding of the intricate mesh of cultural values in the period. Knights can make a direct application of his economic ideas to the study of Jonson's attack on monopoly. Outside the narrow limits of this type of investigation he flounders. His generalizations about the nature of Elizabethan culture indicate that he has no method for a fundamental appraisal of the relation of literature to society. He tells us, for instance, that Elizabethan culture at its height is homogeneous, and that, although there may be well-defined social divisions in the world of men, these divisions have no discernible effect on the world of letters. Such a homogeneous culture might seem to proceed logically from the economic alliance between the middle class and the court. Class divisions, though present, are harmonized by economic expediency. Literature, therefore, expresses a broad *national* (but classless) exuberance. The same interests and the same enthusiasms permeate the whole of society.

Now it is true that a cultural synthesis was achieved in the great years of Elizabeth's reign, but this synthesis was not "classless." The student is fortunate in having two valuable source books for the study of class psychology in Elizabethan literature: Louis B. Wright's *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England* and Elkin Wilson's *England's Eliza*.

Through an exhaustive examination of popular plays, ballads, sermons and tracts, Dr Wright finds and presents undeniable evidence for the existence of a burning class-consciousness in the period. The citizen was filled with the sense of his own importance as bulwark of the state. To him, the monarchy was a middle-class monarchy, and the court a pretty but useless gewgaw. If one may use the term "democracy" in the *social* rather than in the political sense, then there is democracy in the familiar, almost comradely treatment of kings in Elizabethan middle-class literature. The king is felt not to be above the people but to be one of them, a friendly, sociable, but powerful symbol of the middle class itself.

The courtly literary tradition was quite separate in tone from the bourgeois tradition. It was more learned, more skilful, more urbane. Nor had it discarded the graceful trappings of feudal chivalry, the pageantry and splendour of its inheritance. Perhaps the most significant contribution of Dr Wilson's book is its demonstration of the way in which traditional courtly symbols, derived from the Middle Ages, were transformed in connotation by new social pressures. Sir Artegall has a sense of justice proper to the ruthless merchant adventurer of the time. Lyrical adoration of the Virgin Mary becomes lyrical adoration of the Virgin Queen. Paradoxically enough, a whole host of symbols and ceremonies from the feudal world are converted to the celebration of that royal power which had brought feudalism to an end. A peculiar cultural chemistry, then, results from the Elizabethan social complex. For a brief period, and most notably in the work of Shakespeare, you get a fusion of the courtly and the middle-class traditions, of knightly dignity and splendour with the simple, healthy, down-to-earth, even rowdy familiarity of the citizen.

The two books last mentioned give you the "feel" of the age—the subjective manifestations of the political, social, and economic forces in motion. One can see on this cultural level the contribution of rival class outlooks to a common synthesis of values, a synthesis achieved under the impact of recognizable social forces. But one also observes that while the underlying drive of the age may be social or economic, the interrelation of social and aesthetic phenomena is not always simple, direct, or predictable. It is an age of flux. Diverse cultural traditions—from the Middle Ages, from the classics, from the continent, from the London counting-house—intermingle. There is often a curious metamorphosis of traditional values and symbols. A knight is not merely a knight. A king is not merely a king. Political and economic references may often contain unsuspected layers of meaning and feeling. And the problem is complicated for the modern scholar by the fact that the Elizabethan cultural synthesis seeks to absorb far more than it can absorb.

In a paper presented to the "Literature and Society" section of the Modern Language Association (December, 1940),[7] Edwin Berry Burgum shows that the Elizabethan deference to classical

[7]Published in the *Sewanee Review*, July-September, 1941.

conventions sometimes resulted in curiously hybrid literary and dramatic forms. The drama of Sophocles has a "closed structure." The aesthetic value of the *Oedipus* is "inextricably involved with its practical value as propaganda for conformity to the dominant norms of Greek conduct." Oedipus accepts his punishment as the just working out of the inexorable moral law. The mores of society determine the inevitability of the tragedy. However, Elizabethan tragedy often "violates the closed form of the Greeks while it melodramatically purports to imitate it." For instance, Hamlet's problem is "resolved by chance." The dramatic conflicts are "mechanically resolved in an orgy of killing." Consequently, the one social generalization inherent in the play, a generalization which, if appropriately treated, might have given unity and inevitability to the tragedy, is obscured. In the Senecan "avalanche of deaths" we almost forget that dissension within the royal family has brought chaos to the state and has invited foreign invasion.

The sociological critic, then, must do more than seek in the literature of the period direct evidence of political and economic ideas. It is not enough to know what Shakespeare and Spenser and Jonson thought. This is only the first step for the scholar, though an important one which he too often hesitates to take. Nor is it enough to understand the economic motivation of the age —although without such understanding the sociological critic will be helpless, and his work, at best, will be one-dimensional. The sociological critic must investigate not only ideas and "forces," but also the subjective manifestations of these ideas and forces in the cultural climate as a whole. The Elizabethan did not always call a spade a spade. He had no scientific terminology for politics or economics. On the aesthetic level, amid the confusion of diverse cultural traditions, political and economic implications may be disguised. A thorough study of the kind of material presented by Wright and Wilson should therefore be made before any final evaluation of an author's political and economic attitudes is attempted.

Professor Burgum's paper suggests a new and more useful treatment of those ancient bogies of scholarly research—"sources" and "influences." Indeed, the problem he raises of the *interplay* of cultural and social forces is perhaps the ultimate problem within

the province of literary scholarship. One wonders whether a sound aesthetic judgment of any Elizabethan writer is possible without the use, in part, of the sociological method. One wonders how many of our conventional academic opinions about literary form, imagery, symbolism, characterization, etc., in Elizabethan literature may be changed by the scholarly work of the next ten years.

SHORTER NOTICES

The Translations of Lucian by Erasmus and St. Thomas More. By C. R. Thomson, Ithaca, N.Y. 1940.

Mr Thomson, who is an Instructor in English at Cornell, has written a pleasant and illuminating foot-note to the history of sixteenth-century literature. For us, Lucian is a magnificent journalist, amazingly able, facile and witty, familiar with all contemporary and earlier thought, art and literature, using the whole ancient civilization as material for charming satirical essays, stories and dialogues that are always clear-headed, always utterly disillusioned. His sharpness of outline, his glittering, somewhat metallic wit, his smiling yet deadly hatred of cant, bring to mind our own Jewish writers—Disraeli, Zangwill, Mr Max Beerbohm. But for those puissant saints and scholars who were involved in the controversies of the Reformation, his importance was both greater and more varied. "St. Thomas More, a pious Catholic, enjoyed his wit and his satire of vice and hypocrisy. Luther, who did not know him so well, thought of him only as an atheistic scoffer at religion. . . . That grave and earnest Christian Sir Thomas Elyot recommended Lucian's dialogues for boys, but he was careful to add that some of them ought to remain untouched." Erasmus and More were close friends: they studied Lucian together and incited one another to translate him. Their enthusiasm has left clear traces in those celebrated works, *The Praise of Folly* and *Utopia*. Both learned from him the value of irony in literature and thus became the first to exhibit that Lucianism which has so often given brilliance and pungency to later writing—the spirit of Landor, Heine and Anatole France.

Students of either More or Erasmus will find much profit in this book, for Mr Thomson's account appears no less complete

than lucid, and his businesslike notes prove him a master of all the "literature." (From them, by the way, we learn that a few years ago one passionate microscopist saw fit to bestow on mankind a paper some thirty pages long about "Thomas More der Heitere." If even the blitheness of the great must quiver on our operating-tables, why are there no "studies" or "aspects" of Erasmus' remarks on the English superiority in kissing?)

What comfort, what inspiration, may the Hellenist of our time draw from chance sentences in Erasmus' letters written in days when Europe was realizing anew not only the charm and splendour of Greek, but its indispensability also! "Experience tells me that in all literary pursuits we are nothing without Greek scholarship." "As soon as I get hold of money, I shall buy first some Greek authors, and then some clothes"—a striking parallel to a famous sentence of Chaucer. He has now ceased to translate Lucian because "knowledge of Greek begins to spread everywhere." One reason for this eagerness was the very scarcity of books and teachers. Nowadays too many of us, commanding marvellous facilities, appear to think that if we read without compulsion so much as a single book of Xenophon we should receive a gilt-edged certificate. He who was perhaps the greatest classical scholar that ever lived, Joseph Justus Scaliger, carried out his immense reading on the march and beside camp-fires during the French wars of religion.

G.N.

This Great Argument: A Study of Milton's De Doctrina Christiana *as a Gloss upon* Paradise Lost. By Maurice Kelley. (Princeton Studies in English, volume XXII.) Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1941. ($5.00)

The relationship between *De Doctrina Christiana* and *Paradise Lost* has been in dispute since the treatise was discovered in 1823, largely because it has been variously assigned to the years before 1640, to those between 1643 and 1645, to those immediately preceding the epic, and to the closing years of Milton's life. This diversity has arisen from the condition of the manuscript—a fair copy made by an amanuensis (apparently from an earlier version) which has been much revised in the same and other hands, and of which the first fourteen chapters (and some other passages) were entirely recopied after Milton's death. The first and most im-

portant step towards dating the treatise was taken when Professor Hanford showed in 1920 that the fair copy was made by Jeremy Picard between about 1658 and 1660, and argued (from this and other evidence) that in the treatise Milton was working out the doctrinal basis of his epic. But there remained the revisions by Picard and others. In two articles and a study (1934-9) Professor Sewell argued from these revisions and from certain doctrinal differences he discerned between the treatise and the epic that Milton's opinions became more heterodox after Picard's copy and after *Paradise Lost*, that the revisions belonged to his later years, and that consequently the treatise could not satisfactorily explain the problems of the epic. Some aspects of Sewell's doctrinal interpretations were questioned; but what was clearly needed was a thorough examination of the revisions, an exact evaluation of their doctrinal significance, and, if possible, the identification and dating of the revising hands.

Professor Kelley's first three chapters (with his appendices) fully supply the first two requisites and make the third less significant for the epic. It was almost inevitable that part of his study should become a refutation of Sewell, though more of the sniping and skirmishing (here and elsewhere) might have been confined to the notes. Even the author of the *Areopagitica* perceived the difference between great arguments and "petty disputations." Yet Kelley's exact and learned account of the manuscript and its revisions puts Milton students heavily in his debt, for he makes the facts accessible in detail and abundantly demonstrates that the disputed revisions merely clarify and elaborate the argument, improve the style, add proof texts, and so on, that they serve to reinforce rather than to modify the original Picard doctrines, and that they do not indicate *any* significant change in Milton's opinions. It is true that it has proved impossible to date the revisions; but even if new documents should lead to the identification of the amanuenses, the fact remains that they made no significant changes. Some minor questions still hang upon the decision as to whether they all worked before or after the epic; but Kelley has conclusively shown that the treatise as it stands expresses Milton's beliefs before and perhaps during the composition of *Paradise Lost* and that it should be freely used in interpreting the poem. This part of the great argument he has brought to an end.

His remaining five chapters deal with the doctrinal relationship

between the two works—the statements of each being usefully brought together under various heads, with commentaries where the relationship is not immediately clear. This part of the study is designed to illuminate disputed points, to show that the treatise provides a complete gloss for the epic, and especially to dispose of the fatal notion that Milton's beliefs were of no consequence to his art. The Conclusion is devoted to a series of refreshingly blunt attacks on those who assume that the power of Milton's poem owes nothing to his sturdy and somewhat inflexible brand of seventeenth-century Protestantism, on the wide-ranging source-hunters who ignore Milton's own immediate source, on the modernists who would make him a precursor of the post-Kantians by unearthing improbable debts to the Zohar, and on the impressionists who cannot think he really believed what in the treatise he said he thought. Since Kelley has clearly demonstrated the close relationship, temporal and doctrinal, between the treatise and the epic, these salutary attacks are not unjustified; but it is perhaps unfortunate that he should conclude with denunciations of bad methods rather than with an account of what he thinks the right method and of the directions in which his findings should lead us. The really fruitful significance of the book is indicated in what are certainly its best and most suggestive passages—those of his commentaries in which he explains apparent differences between treatise and epic in terms of the difference between dogma and epic art, as for example in the case of the Son (pp. 98-106). Here our attention is focussed on matters of prime importance, on Milton's creative intention and methods. We perceive that because the treatise largely conditioned the poem's structure, narrative technique and characterization as well as its doctrine, we must use it as our first gloss. Where we find apparent differences we shall have to ask, with Kelley on the Son, to what extent they arise from differences in method and presentation; and our answers will deepen our sense of the poem's art. If, as seems possible in the account of the Creation, this inquiry does not fully satisfy us, we shall have to ask if the difference is not the result of Milton's having perceived new problems and new meanings in the process of translating abstract thought into imagined epic action. (A similar experience is the secret of much that seems obscure and contradictory in his prose.) Here, as with such matters as the characterization of Satan (where the treatise provides only the barest outline) we shall

be urged on in our study of Milton's personality, experience and reading. Throughout, the treatise will provide a first gloss and a check by indicating the doctrinal basis of the poem; but it will not in itself put an end to our inevitable differences of opinion about the total meaning of the epic. To *this* great argument Kelley has made a most important contribution; but it will and should go on as long as *Paradise Lost* is regarded as both doctrinal and exemplary.

A. E. B.

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